

FOREWORD BY SWĀMĪ B. V. TRIPURĀRI

# Mystic Poetry

RŪPA GOSVĀMIN'S

Uddhava-  
sandeśa  
&  
Hamsadūta



Translation and annotation

Jan Brzezinski

# *Mystic Poetry*

RŪPA GOSVAMĪN'S

*Uddhava-  
sandeśa  
&  
Hamsadūta*

Translation and annotation  
**Jan Brzezinski**



MANDALA  
*publishing group*

The Sanskrit text for *Uddhava-sandēśa* and *Hamsadūta*  
can be found on our website at [www.mandala.org](http://www.mandala.org)

Mandala Publishing Group  
1585-A Folsom Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103 USA  
415 626 1080 phone  
415 626 1510 fax

239C Joo Chait Road  
Singapore 427496  
65 342 3117 phone  
65 342 3115 fax

[mandala@mandala.org](mailto:mandala@mandala.org)  
[www.mandala.org](http://www.mandala.org)

Printed in Hong Kong through Palace Press International

© Mandala Publishing Group 1999.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the prior permission of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

ISBN: 1-886069-09-3

# Contents

Foreword	vii
Introduction	1
Abbreviations	44
Map of Vraja	45



*Uddāhava-sandēśa* 47



*Haṁsadūta* 103

Notes	165
-------	-----



## Foreword

IN MY MONASTIC STUDENT LIFE as a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, a senior member of the monastery once cited a Sanskrit verse famous in our tradition and asked me what I thought of when I heard it. The verse runs thus: *namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*. "O most munificent incarnation! You are Kṛṣṇa himself appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. You have assumed a golden color (that of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī), and you are widely distributing pure love of Kṛṣṇa. We offer our respectful obeisances unto you."

Somewhat intimidated by the question, I remained silent. He then answered himself, "Rūpa Gosvāmī," the verse's author. No further explanation was necessary, for my mind went with his to the significance of Śrī Rūpa for our lineage, one that is sometimes referred to as the Rūpānuga *sampradāya*, the family of Rūpa Gosvāmī's followers.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has written *śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya rādhā kṛṣṇa nabe anya rūpānuga janera jivana*. "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are one: this is the life and soul of the followers of Śrī Rūpa." Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are the followers of Śrī Caitanya. Who would know about him and his spiritual significance were it not for Rūpa Gosvāmī?

Of the twenty-six qualities devotees of Kṛṣṇa are said to possess, one is "poetic." Thus all true devotees are such. Indeed, they live in a poetic land of divine love in which all speech is said to be song, all walking dance. Of the principal associates of Śrī Caitanya

not less than 54 were considered poets in the formal sense. Amongst these, Rūpa Gosvāmī is the foremost. In this small volume, two important works of his have been rendered into English for the first time by a highly accomplished Sanskrit scholar and spiritual practitioner of the Gauḍīya tradition.

Both of Śrī Rūpa's poems found in this volume, *Hamsadūta* and *Uddhava-sandēśa*, stress the theme of *vipralambha*, or "love in separation." Thus they are helpful for the spiritual practitioner whose only approach to union in divine love with Kṛṣṇa is through the pangs of separation, "the dark night of the soul." Śrī Caitanya exhibited extreme separation from Kṛṣṇa in the mood of Rādhā when he resided in Jagannātha Purī during the final years of his earthly appearance. He is sometimes referred to as the *vipralambha-mūrti*, or "deity form of separation." Through his own example he taught the importance of cultivating the love in separation that makes the heart grow fonder.

Although similar in appearance to mundane separation, *vipralambha* differs in important ways. In mundane separation between lover and beloved, the separation is painful because sensual interest is not fulfilled. In a higher sense, mundane union is also painful, for while it gratifies one's sensual interest, it does not touch the soul. In material union, the soul sleeps deeply. In consideration of this, mundane separation may have greater absolute value than union, for should mundane separation endure, it often turns to detachment, causing one to think about the inevitable consequences of mundane love that is here today and gone tomorrow. As we move from the wave-like union and separation of mundane love to the calm sea of spiritual and philosophical introspection, the soul, our self, comes to life.

Life is not merely the cessation of that which keeps the soul in slumber. It has its own positive value. It is this life of the soul that Śrī

Rūpa's poems address—the *lilā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's divine love play. Although there are parallels, these *lilās* are not to be equated with mundane romance. They are similar in appearance, yet different in substance. While mundane love is full of sweet nothings, the spiritual love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is grounded in the realized wisdom of the futility of mundane love. Rather than sweet nothings, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *lilā* is something very sweet. In the consideration of Śrī Rūpa, even a scent of it steals away the minds of liberated souls.

In contrast to mundane separation, the devotee's separation from Kṛṣṇa is joyful inasmuch as it is devoid of selfish concern and thus awakens the soul. Putting aside the higher debate as to the measure of joy or pain experienced in transcendental separation raised by Jan Brzezinski in his learned introduction, this much we know for sure: selfish desire is the cause of all suffering, whereas selflessness is the basis of joy. The separation of the gopīs from Kṛṣṇa, in which they long for Rādhā's union with him, is a longing for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, who they know cannot be happy without her. It has no tinge of selfishness.

Here we note the basic difference between lust and love of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī states it thus: *ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā-tāre bali 'kāma' kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dbare 'prema' nāma*. "The desire to gratify one's own senses is *kāma* (lust), but the desire to please the senses of Kṛṣṇa is *prema* (love)."

It is noteworthy that in both of Rūpa's poems the central figure is Rādhā. In *Haṁsādūta*, Lalitā Sakhī tells her swan messenger of Rādhā's condition, and in *Uddhava-sandēśa*, Kṛṣṇa speaks of his love for her as well as her love for him. We are to learn from this that both God and the soul are joined in love, another name for which is Rādhā. The love personified by Rādhā unites the soul and Kṛṣṇa.

Rūpa Gosvāmī teaches us that to love Kṛṣṇa we must learn to satisfy Rādhā. In *Haṁsadūta*, he shows us the way to do so, revealing his own position in the eternal *līlā*, one we are to ultimately emulate in a spiritual body of our own.

However, before we go too deeply, it will be prudent to discuss the significance of the theme of separation in the life of the general audience and the practitioner, rather than in that of the accomplished devotee. Most readers of *Mystic Poetry* will come from the two former categories.

When a reader of general spiritual interest with a taste for poetry approaches this book, initially he or she can derive considerable benefit by reflecting on its philosophical insight into the folly of mundane love, which is implied throughout the work. The value of introspection arising from mundane separation appears at first to be what Kṛṣṇa is taking about in his message to the gopīs sent through Uddhava, as it is originally portrayed in the forty-second chapter of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Thus the general reader would benefit considerably from cross-referencing *Uddhava-sandēśā* with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*Uddhava-sandēśa* reveals the inner meaning of the *Bhāgavatam*'s version of Kṛṣṇa's message. This original message, referred to in Jan's introduction, appears to say that the gopīs are to transcend their pangs of separation and make their minds steady with knowledge of the soul. An acquaintance with this outer message about the underlying oneness of ultimate reality is in fact required for entering into the sweetness of the gopīs' dissatisfaction with Kṛṣṇa's message and thus realizing Kṛṣṇa's inner intent.

The firm nondual structure beyond our shaky ground of mental dualities must be in place before we can enter the forest bowers of

Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's divine play. The value of contemplating the futility of mundane love in the context of studying Rūpa Gosvāmī's poems is unique. As we realize such truths we simultaneously develop the spiritual longing of love in separation that leads to union, i.e., entrance into the *līlā* itself—spiritual life. Rūpa Gosvāmī's poetry describes a divine world of which this mundane world and its so-called love are but a reflection. See through the dim reflection to the light of divine reality and you will know that true love does indeed exist after all, where Kṛṣṇa's pleasure is the object of the awakened soul's longing.

*Sādhakas*, practitioners on Śrī Rūpa's path, will enter more deeply into the significance of the text. No doubt it was written for them, and moreover for those amongst them who are considerably developed in their practice. Those *sādhakas* who are fixed in their *bhajana* life (*niṣṭhā*), both in terms of having cleared the principal material distractions (*anarthas*) from the path and in establishing their own particular spiritual interest or inclination (likely the same as that of Śrī Rūpa as it is for most in his line), stand to benefit the most. Other, less developed *sādhakas*, and those whose particular spiritual interest in divine service falls only within the most general parameters of what it means to be a follower of Śrī Rūpa (as opposed to following his particular spiritual emotion or *bhāva*) will benefit marginally in comparison.

However, all *sādhakas* must be acquainted with the principle of love in separation. The service rendered to Śrī Guru in separation is perhaps the greatest testimony to a practitioner's spiritual advancement. Spiritual progress moves us from the propensity to enjoy objects of this world through the senses to selfless service to Godhead. Śrī Guru is the representative of Kṛṣṇa. As such, he accepts service



from the practitioner in the spirit of serving Kṛṣṇa. *Sādhakas* are taught not to enjoy the guru but to serve the guru. When we serve in separation, leaving aside our own preference to be in the guru's personal presence, and when in such instances we understand that such separation will enable us to render greater service, we serve selflessly. Thus, those of Śrī Rūpa's books which extol the virtues of love in separation in general can no doubt help even the neophyte *sādhaka* embrace this important principle, putting it into practice within the limited realm of his or her own spiritual experience. Furthermore, reading about the *bhāva* of Śrī Rūpa and his own pangs of separation will have a powerful influence on the subsequent development of the practitioner's own *bhāva*, with the strong likelihood that it will blossom into the same spiritual emotion as that of Rūpa Gosvāmī—Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's *mañjarī-bhāva*.

Advanced practitioners following the *bhāva* of Śrī Rūpa, those whose *bhajana* is fixed (*niṣṭhā*), those with taste (*ruci*), and those with attachment for the object of their *bhajana* (*āśakti*), and even more so those whose spiritual emotion has been awakened (*bhāva*), stand to derive the greatest benefit from reading and relishing Śrī Rūpa's poems. Such devotees find themselves personally present within the poems of Śrī Rūpa, which come alive for them. For such devotees, reading Śrī Rūpa's poems is a deep meditation in which they vacillate between seeing themselves as practitioners sitting in meditation and losing sight of their bodily environment to experience themselves within the reality described in the poem itself.

Jan Brzezinski has beautifully introduced Śrī Rūpa's *bhāva* in the paragraphs which precede the translation of *Haṁsadūta*, fleshing out the words issuing from the mouth of Lalitā Sakhī in that poem. Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, the inner spiritual identity of Rūpa Gosvāmī, serves

selflessly under the direction of Rādhā's fast friend, Lalitā. In doing so, the author so identifies with Śrī Rādhā that he experiences all of her divine emotions, the *mahābhāva* of *mahābhāva-svarūpiṇī* Rādhā.

According to Gauḍīya theology, this spiritual experience of aesthetic rapture is the furthest reach of what Śrī Caitanya came to bless the world with, that which Kṛṣṇa himself longs for. He did so through no one person more than Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Swāmī B. V. Tripurāri

# Introduction

## Śrī-Caitanya-mano'bhiṣṭam

The contributions of Rūpa Gosvāmī (d. 1568 AD) to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* are manifold. Narottama dāsa's famous invocatory prayer to Rūpa in his *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* tells us that Rūpa understood Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission and was successful in establishing it on this earth (*śrī-caitanya-mano'bhiṣṭam sthāpitam yena bhūtale*). In his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes in several places that Rūpa Gosvāmī was granted access to Mahāprabhu's innermost emotional state.

The event which confirmed this special status took place when Rūpa was residing in Purī, probably in AD 1517. That year, during the Rathayātrā festival, Rūpa was amongst the many devotees of Mahāprabhu who watched him as he stood before Jagannātha's chariot, gazing in the mood of Rādhā upon the Lord of the Universe. At that time, Mahāprabhu began to recite a verse from the *Kāvya-prakāśa*, which, though superficially having nothing to do with Kṛṣṇa, put him into a divine trance and made him dance ecstatically.

That verse, much discussed in the literature of the poeticians, was as follows:<sup>1</sup>

*yaḥ kaumāra-baraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra-kṣapās  
te conmilita-mālati-surabbayaḥ prauḍbāḥ kadambānilāḥ  
sā caivāsmi tathāpi tatra surata-vyāpāra-līlā-vidbahu  
revā-rodhasi vetasī-taru-tale cetāḥ samutkaṇṭhate*

He who took my maidenhood is verily  
 he who is today my groom;  
 and these the same spring evenings  
 when the impetuous, fragrant breezes  
 are heavy with the scent of newly blossoming jasmine.  
 And I too am the same person —  
 yet my heart yearns for the reedbeds  
 by the banks of the stream  
 where we were initiated into  
 the joyful games of love.

Other than Mahāprabhu's secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, no one was able to understand the meaning of this verse in the context of the Rathayātrā festival. Rūpa Gosvāmī, however, had an insight into the Lord's state of mind and later composed a verse which brought this vision out into the open. He wrote it down on a palm leaf and tucked it into the thatched roof of his cottage. When he was off taking his bath in the sea, Mahāprabhu came by and fortuitously discovered the palm leaf. When he read the verse, he was astonished to see Rūpa's clear intuition into his innermost feelings. Rūpa's Kṛṣṇa-centered pastiche was as follows:

*priyaḥ so'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ sabacari kurukṣetra-militas  
 tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham/  
 tathāpy antaḥ-kbelan-madbura-murali-pañcama-juṣe  
 mano me kālindī-ṭulina-viṇāya śṛṇhayati//*

O companion! This is the same beloved Kṛṣṇa  
 meeting me here in Kurukṣetra,  
 and I the same Rādhā,

both of us feel that same joy of meeting.  
 Even so, my mind hankers for the forest  
 by the banks of the Yamunā,  
 where the fifth note of his flute  
 reverberated sweetly within my heart.<sup>2</sup> (Padyāvali, 383)

When Rūpa returned from bathing, Mahāprabhu gave him an affectionate slap and said, "How did you know what was in my mind?" He then embraced him tightly. The Lord subsequently took the verse and showed it to his secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara, asking him, as was his wont, to examine it for any possible faults. He asked him the same question he had asked of Rūpa. Svarūpa answered, "It could only be as the result of your special benediction."<sup>3</sup>

### Mahāprabhu's companions appreciate Rūpa's poetic talent

Not long thereafter, Mahāprabhu heard another of Rūpa Gosvāmī's verses, this time a glorification of the Holy Name from the play *Vidagdha-mādhava*, the composition of which Rūpa had recently undertaken.

*tuṇḍe tāṇḍaviniṁ ratim vitanute tuṇḍāvali-labdhaye  
 karṇa-kroḍa-kaṇḍambiniṁ ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyah spṛhām  
 cetah-prāṅgaṇa-saṅginiṁ vijayate sarvendriyāṇām kṛtim  
 no jāne janito kiyaḍbbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī*

As they dance madly on my tongue,  
 they awaken in me the desire  
 to possess a host of tongues;  
 as they sprout in my ears,  
 they give me the hope that one day



I may have millions of ears,  
 and as they enter into the garden of my heart  
 they overcome the activities  
 of every one of my senses  
 and leave me inert!  
 I do not know how much ambrosia has gone  
 into the creation  
 of these two syllables  
 of Kṛṣṇa's name.<sup>4</sup>

Now fully cognizant of Rūpa's talents, Mahāprabhu decided to display them to his entire entourage. One day, he came to Rūpa's cottage with his chief associates including Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Rāmānanda Rāya, and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, all of whom were authorities on theology as well as the poetic and devotional *rasas*. Svarūpa Dāmodara read the *priyaḥ so'yaṁ* verse quoted above to all the devotees and explained to them how, as a result of Mahāprabhu's special mercy, Rūpa had been able to understand something beyond the ken of even Brahmā and the demigods. The Lord then asked Rūpa to read the *tuṇḍe tāṇḍavini* verse glorifying the Holy Name to the great delight of his devotees.

Then Rāmānanda Rāya, a poet and playwright himself, began discussing the subject matter of Rūpa's plays with him. He asked to hear the verse glorifying the object of his devotion which would appear at the beginning of the play. At first, Rūpa was reluctant to recite his composition in front of the Lord, as it was he who was the object of the *maṅgala* verse. However, when the Lord insisted that he continue, Rūpa read his verse aloud. Mahāprabhu externally expressed displeasure, saying, "Your praises are overdone. It is an exaggera-

tion," but the rest of the devotees were overcome with astonishment at Rūpa's poetic talent as well as his analysis of the purpose of Mahāprabhu's mission.

The verse is the second of the first act of *Vidagdha-mādhava*:

*anarṇita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau  
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam  
bariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitaḥ  
sadā hr̥daya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacinandanah*

The elevated, effulgent taste of sacred rapture  
is the wealth of devotional love;  
the Lord never gives it at any time;  
yet, out of his mercy in this age of quarrel,  
to distribute this treasure to the world,  
he has become incarnate in his golden form.  
The son of Śacī is like a lion;  
may he dwell in the cave of your heart forever.

This verse, which Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has included in the invocation of his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, is a most significant panegyric to Caitanya Mahāprabhu as it expresses, for the first time, devotion in terms of *rasa*. The term *rasa* has its source in literature and its application to religious life as a theological category is Rūpa's contribution. Here, he gives the credit for that contribution to Mahāprabhu himself.<sup>5</sup>

When Rāmānanda Rāya heard the verse and others from the *Vidagdha-mādhava*, he began to praise Rūpa Gosvāmī's talent and the blessings the Lord had given him.

Having heard the verse, Rāmānanda said to the Lord, "I wish I had a thousand tongues with which to glorify Rūpa's poetic ability. This is not merely poetry, it is a fountain of ambrosia. He has exactly followed the classical tradition in composing his play.<sup>6</sup> His description of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's love affairs is truly wonderful. My ears and mind are spinning with delight upon hearing them. (CC Antya 1.192–4)

Rāmānanda quoted an ancient verse used to glorify poets. The quality of a poem is its ability to affect the *sahṛdaya*, or sympathetic audience:

*kiṁ kāvyena kaves tasya  
kiṁ kāṇḍena dbanuṣmataḥ  
parasya hṛdaye lagnam  
na gbhūrṇayati yac chiraḥ*

"What is the use of a poet's poetry and what the use of a bowman's arrow if upon piercing the heart of their target they do not cause his head to spin?"

Rāmānanda continued by confirming Svarūpa Dāmodara's intuition: without Mahāprabhu's blessings, it would be impossible for an ordinary living being to write poetry of such a high order.

### Mahāprabhu's praise of Rūpa

Then it came Mahāprabhu's turn to say something. Mahāprabhu's qualifications as a judge of poetry had been established earlier in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* when it was recounted how he had pinpointed the virtues and faults in the Digvijayī Paṇḍita's poem glorifying the Ganges. There, Mahāprabhu is said to have quoted a verse attrib-

uted to Bharata indicating the high standard to which poetry should be held:

*rasālaṅkāravat kāvyam  
doṣa-yuk ced vibhūṣitam  
syād vapuḥ sundaram api  
śvitreṇaikena durbhagam*

"Even a poem filled with all the appropriate sentiments and ornaments, if flawed, is comparable to a person who, though possessed of great beauty, has been deformed by white leprosy." (CC Ādi 16.71)

Thus, it is clear that when Kṛṣṇadāsa quotes Mahāprabhu's short statement summarizing the characteristic of Rūpa's poetry, it is of some significance. Mahāprabhu said:

*madhura prasanna ihār kāvya sālaṅkāṛ  
aiche kavitra binu nabe raser pracār*

"Rūpa's poetry is sweet, pleasing, and filled with literary ornaments. Without such poetry, the dissemination of *rasa* will not be possible." (CC Antya 1.198)

The rather significant place given by Mahāprabhu to poetry in the preaching of the *bhakti* movement is clear from this verse. It is also evident that the distribution of *rasa*, or "sacred rapture," is the goal of such preaching. But most clearly, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī uses Mahāprabhu's own words to confirm Rūpa's leadership in this literary aspect of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Of course, neither literary achievement nor scholarship on their own would have been sufficient to assure Rūpa's leadership in a religious movement dominated by the spirit of renunciation exemplified by Mahāprabhu himself. Thus Kavirāja Gosvāmī makes a point

of further glorifying Rūpa's achievements as a renunciate and practitioner of devotional *sādhana*. Both he and his brother Sanātana set unequaled standards of discipline and worship:

These brothers have no fixed residence. They spend each night beneath a different tree in the forest, one night under one tree and the next under another. Sometimes they beg dry food from a *brāhmaṇa*'s house and sometimes cooked food like bread and fried chickpeas. In this way, they have given up all kinds of material enjoyments. They wrap themselves in a quilt and wear nothing else but a piece of torn cloth, claiming no possession but a clay waterpot. They are engaged in rendering service to the Lord almost twenty-four hours daily by chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and discussing his pastimes or dancing in great jubilation. They spend only an hour and a half in sleep, and some days, when overcome by the love of chanting the Lord's holy name, they do not sleep at all. They spend their time writing transcendental works about divine aesthetics, listening to talks about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, or simply meditating on him. (CC Madhya 19.127–31)

Rūpa acted as leader to the *sampradāya* in many ways: by setting the standard of practice and revealing the holy places in Vṛndāvana, by spearheading the theology based on *rasa*, and by revealing that *rasa* through the medium of his poetry. It would be hard to say whether it is Rūpa's poetic or theological talents (or not less importantly, his standards of renunciate Vaiṣṇava behavior) which won him a *de facto* position of leadership in Caitanya's movement, but certainly the poetry itself cannot be



minimized, as evidenced by the three verses quoted on pages 42–43 of this book.

### Dating *Haṁsadūta* and *Uddhava-sandēśa*

The two poems found in this volume are undated and some questions have been raised about when they were written. They are generally accepted to be amongst Rūpa's earliest written works. According to Sushil Kumar De, Rūpa wrote three works, *Haṁsadūta*, *Uddhava-sandēśa*, and *Dānakeli-kaumudī*, before meeting Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu at Rāmakeli in 1514.<sup>7</sup> The primary reason for making such a claim is that these three works have no dedication to Śrī Caitanya at their beginning, as is found in the greater number of Rūpa's writings.<sup>8</sup>

It should not be altogether surprising if this were the case, as Rūpa came from a South Indian *brāhmaṇa* family with a long history of Kṛṣṇa worship. It also seems that the village of Rāmakeli, where he and his brothers resided, and its surroundings were something of a hotbed of literary Kṛṣṇaism. Two works written by contemporary residents of that district that likely predate the advent of Śrī Caitanya are the *Haricarita* of Caturbhuja, a Sanskrit text on the life of Kṛṣṇa, and the *Gopāla-vijaya*, one of the earliest Bengali poems on the life of Kṛṣṇa.

It could be argued that the *Uddhava-sandēśa* naturally precedes the *Haṁsadūta* for several reasons, and indeed, in this volume, we present that text first. The main reason for this is the primacy of the message from Uddhava in the sequence of events in the *Bhāgavata* (10.46–47). The *Haṁsadūta* speaks of Uddhava's visit to Vraja, while the opposite is not true, i.e., there is no indication that the gopīs sent a message to Kṛṣṇa prior to his commissioning of Uddhava as in the *Uddhava-sandēśa*. Furthermore, Rūpa's somewhat closer adherence

to the *dūta-kāvya* genre's conventions in this work could be considered evidence for the priority of its composition.

However, of the three above-mentioned works, it is my feeling that only *Haṁsadūta* could have been written prior to Rūpa's first encounter with Caitanya. In that work (verse 141), Rūpa refers to his guru (and elder brother) Sanātana as being known in the world as "Sākara,"<sup>9</sup> this is commonly understood to have been Sanātana's title when working at the court of Shāh Hussain.<sup>10</sup> Rūpa himself was known as Dabīr Khāṣ (*dabīr* means simply "writer, secretary," while *khāṣ* indicates "for the king's private use.") In some texts, this latter title is applied to both Rūpa and Sanātana.<sup>11</sup> At any rate, the use of what is evidently a title from the Muslim court of Murshidabad rather than the name bestowed upon him by Mahāprabhu supports the contention that the *Haṁsadūta* at least was most likely composed prior to their encounter.

On the other hand, there are good reasons to believe that *Uddhava-sandēśa* was written when Rūpa and Sanātana were already living in Vraja, not long after meeting Caitanya. First of all, Rūpa uses a prototype of the poetic strategy found in his other works—the insertion of the name given to him by Caitanya into a dedication (*maṅgalācaraṇa*), here found in the poem's penultimate verse (130). In *Uddhava-sandēśa*, as elsewhere (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, etc.), this verse to the guru can also be read as a dedication to Kṛṣṇa, differing only in that there is no pun on the word *rūpa* (as it is difficult to read *rūpāśraya-pada-sarojanmanah* as anything other than "whose lotus feet are the shelter of Rūpa"), nor does it include the name of his brother and guru Sanātana. On the other hand, Rūpa refers to his guru (*svāmīnaḥ*) as *kurvāṇasya prathita-mathurā-maṇḍale tāṇḍavāni*, "dancing madly in the circle of Mathurā which was the theme [of the

poem].” This would seem to indicate that Sanātana (and Rūpa) were living in the Vraja area at the time of its composition.

A further, even more convincing argument for the later composition of *Uddhava-sandēśa* is that it shows signs of a first-hand knowledge of the Vraja area, in particular the area around Nanda Grām where Rūpa is known to have lived. Knowledge of place names such as Rahelā, Saṭṭikara, etc. could not have been derived from any Purāṇic source. This is not true of *Haṁsadūta*, in which all site names can be traced to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and which furthermore shows no knowledge of their relative placement. (See map on p.45)

Both poems demonstrate the interest in the geography of Vraja-maṇḍala which developed greatly during the Gosvāmins’ stay in Vraja. Indeed, it is said that Caitanya ordered Rūpa and Sanātana to “discover” the various sites of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the Vraja area.<sup>12</sup> Rūpa is sometimes credited with the authorship of a *Mathurā-māhātmya*, or glorification of the Mathurā (Vraja) area.<sup>13</sup> The words from verse 130 quoted above (*pratibita-mathurā-maṇḍale*) also indicate that the poem was written, at least partially, with the specific intention of glorifying the land of Mathurā.

### The Dūta-kāvya Genre

*Uddhava-sandēśa* and *Haṁsadūta* are written in a genre fairly well-known throughout the Sanskrit world as *dūta-kāvya*, first made popular by the immortal Kālidāsa, whose *Meghadūta* (the cloud messenger) is the prototype of the genre. The *dūta-kāvya* is a type of *khaṇḍa-kāvya*, or shorter poetic work distinguished from the *mahā-kāvya*, which is divided into several *sargas*, each dominated by a different meter.<sup>14</sup> According to the writers on rhetoric, *khaṇḍa-kāvyas* deal with a single subject matter, either of the erotic (*madhura-rasa*) or religious (*śānta-rasa*) senti-

ment. *Stotras* are considered to be the religious *khaṇḍa-kāvya* and the Gosvāmins and their followers wrote numerous works of this kind, such as Rūpa's *Utkalikāvallārī*, Raghunātha's *Vraja-vilāsa-stava* and *Vilāpakusumāñjalī*, and Prabodhānanda's *Rādhārasa-sudhānidhi*, etc. All of these *stotras* are characterized by the use of a variety of meters.

The erotic *khaṇḍa-kāvya* is most typified by the *dūta-kāvya*, which generally contains 100–150 verses, usually in a single meter, based on the theme of a separated lover sending a messenger, in most cases non-human, to the beloved. In the case of Kālīdāsa's poem, a Yakṣa banished by Kubera and thus separated from his beloved wife sends her a message via a cloud. In Rūpa's poems, the messengers are Uddhava and a swan, respectively.

Another feature of the *dūta-kāvya* is an extensive poetic description of the path to be taken by the messenger, culminating in a description of the recipient of the message, to be followed by the message itself, generally a shorter section of the work. As with most Sanskrit poetry, each verse is treated as an independent entity (*muktaka*), typically described as "a miniature painting depicting amatory situations or sentiments."<sup>15</sup> Both of Rūpa's poems follow the same procedure, except that, true to the preoccupation with Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and the places where they occurred, each location is described in a way inspiring to the devotee, an *uddīpana* for the predominating sentiment, in this case *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra*, or love in separation. Thus Uddhava and the swan are often exhorted to feel ecstasy or reprimanded if they do not feel joy upon visiting the place where a particular *līlā* took place.<sup>16</sup> This greater emotional involvement with the different geographical locations is a distinguishing feature of Rūpa's *dūta-kāvyas* while yet demonstrating how the genre was well-suited to this particular interest of the author.<sup>17</sup>

In *Meghadūta*, the message the cloud is to transmit to the Yakṣa's wife is only 13 verses long (2.40–53); in *Uddhava-sandēśa*, 21, of which 14 are to the other gopīs (102–115) and seven to Rādhā alone (121–127). In the *Hamsadūta*, the message is distinguishably longer, taking up more than half of the entire text: 75 verses (65–140). The added length of this message allows increased descriptions of Rādhā's state of mind, her activities in separation from Kṛṣṇa, etc.

Rūpa's exploitation of the *dūta-kāvya* genre goes beyond that found even in Kālidāsa. It may be argued that the cumulative effect of Rūpa's poem is stronger, in part because the epic and mythic themes which serve as the backdrop to the poem are much more powerful and therefore more focused, in part because of the longer message. The mythological undertones resonate constantly even while the universal archetypal themes of love in separation and union are exploited. As a result of this all-pervading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, both of Rūpa's poems demonstrate a certain thematic unity which even Kālidāsa cannot match. In *Hamsadūta*, Lalitā's description of Rādhā's *divyonmāda*, "madness in separation" builds to a climax not found *Meghadūta*. Rūpa thus bringing to life a state of separation that has been glorified by poets such as Dharmakīrti:

*saṅgama-viraha-vikalpe varam iha viraho na saṅgamas tasya  
ekah sa eva saṅge tribhuvanam api tanmayam virabe*

If between union and separation choose I must,  
verily, 'tis separation from him that I select.  
When united, I possess him alone,  
but in separation, the entire universe is he.<sup>18</sup>

Numerous other *dūta-kāvya*s have been written, especially in Ben-

gal. Dhoyin, a contemporary of Jayadeva, wrote *Pavanadūta*, said by some to have been the first known imitation of Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*.<sup>19</sup> In this poem, a panegyric to Lakṣmaṇa Sena, the king of Gauḍa and Dhoyin's patron, a Gandharva maiden sends the wind as a messenger of love to him, describing him and his country in edifying terms. Most of the other Bengali *dūta-kāvya*s seem to have been written by Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas in the context of Kṛṣṇaism, perhaps as a result of the popularity of the two poems contained in this volume.

In *Manodūta*, said to be written by Viṣṇudāsa, a maternal uncle of Caitanya himself, the devotee sends his mind as a messenger to Kṛṣṇa.<sup>20</sup> According to Kalikumar Datta, another *Haṃsadūta* was written by a certain Raghunātha dāsa (not the Gosvāmin of that name), the Sanskrit original of which has been lost. Later, a short work of 45 verses, *Padāṅkadūta*, was written in the 17th century by Śrīkṛṣṇa Sārvabhauma of Kṛṣṇanagar, in which he sends a message to Kṛṣṇa through his footprints. Rādhāmohana Gosvāmin (d. 1782), the great Vaiṣṇava scholar of the Shantipur Advaitavaṃśa, wrote a commentary on this work. Nandakiśoracandra Gosvāmī wrote a *dūta-kāvya* in the *mahā-kāvya* style in ten *sargas* called the *Śukadūta*. In this work, Kṛṣṇa sends a talking mynah bird as a messenger from Dvārakā to Rādhā in Vṛndāvana. Several *Tulasīdūtas* (sacred basil), a *Pikadūta* (cuckoo), *Candradūta* (the moon), and *Kīradūta* (another mynah)<sup>21</sup> are some of the other messengers found in Bengali works of the genre. Rāma *līlā* is also described in the 16th-century *Bhramaradūta* of Rudra Nyāyavacaspati, in which Rāma sends a bee as a messenger to Sītā in the Aśoka forest where she is being held captive by Rāvaṇa. A majority of the authors using this genre have followed Kālidāsa in the use of the *mandākrāntā* meter, as did Rūpa in *Uddhava-sandeśa*. Our author broke with this tradition, however, in writing *Haṃsadūta* in *śikharīṇī*.<sup>22</sup>

### Separation in Rūpa Gosvāmi's writings

As we have seen, the *dūta-kāvya* genre is concerned with the theme of love in separation. Love in separation has a long tradition not only in secular Sanskrit poetry, but also in the Vaiṣṇava religious literature. Friedhelm Hardy's *Viraha-bhakti* is a classic work on the subject and is heartily recommended to any reader wishing to further understand the early historical development of the theme in the writings of the Alvars and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.<sup>23</sup> For the Gauḍiṃa Vaiṣṇavas, of course, Caitanya Mahāprabhu as described by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja is a living symbol of the intensity of divine love in separation.

For the Gauḍiṃa Vaiṣṇava practitioner, separation, or *viraha*, is the devotional mood by which one attains Kṛṣṇa. Such worship of Kṛṣṇa in separation is said to be the contribution of Mādhavendra Purī, the guru of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's guru.<sup>24</sup> Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes, "the seed of all the religious doctrines of Caitanya Mahāprabhu can be found [in the following verse attributed to Mādhavendra Purī, spoken in the mood of a gopī separated from Kṛṣṇa]."<sup>25</sup>

*ayi dinadayārdra nātha be,  
mathurānātha kadāvalokyase/  
bṛdayaṃ tvad-aloka-kātarāṃ  
dayita bhrāmyati kiṃ karomy aham//*

"O lord whose heart softens  
at seeing the condition of the unfortunate!  
O lord of Mathurā, when will I see you?  
My heart is filled with the pain of your absence  
and is confused, O my love!  
What can I do?"

Commenting on this verse, Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has written, "The feeling of separation from Kṛṣṇa, or transcendental *vipralambha*, is the only practice by which the spirit soul can achieve perfection. Material feelings of separation give rise to a despondency which reveals the attachment one has for matter, whereas the despondency which comes out of feelings of separation for Kṛṣṇa are the best proof of the desire to bring pleasure to his senses."<sup>26</sup>

As the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa uses separation as a tool to increase the devotee's love for him,<sup>27</sup> but in the final analysis, he rewards the sincere devotee with union. This is confirmed in the *Bhāgavata* by Kṛṣṇa when he tells the gopīs at Kurukṣetra that their devotion in separation has the potency to attain him.

*mayi bhaktir bi bhūtānām  
amṛtatvāya kalpate  
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho  
bhavatinām mad-āpanaḥ*<sup>28</sup>

In the *līlā*, also, Kṛṣṇa repeatedly promises not only the gopīs but all the residents of Vraja that he will one day return to Vraja.<sup>29</sup> As the Supreme Deity, Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen as anything other than true to his word. However, the *Bhāgavata* narrative gives no discernable resolution to the separation of the gopīs from Kṛṣṇa. Once Kṛṣṇa leaves for Mathurā, he never returns to Vraja; he never even meets with the mistresses of his youth after he has taken many wives and established himself in a new and distant capital at Dvārakā, except to meet them briefly at Kurukṣetra. Similarly, Rūpa, like Kālidāsa in the *Meghadūta*, provides no final reunion as a counterpoint to his elaborate descriptions of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā's separation in *Hamsadūta* and *Uddhava-sandeha*. This was perhaps because the *dūta-kāvya*s were early



works, for this unresolved separation later proved to be a problem for Gauḍīya theologians. If through the emotional force of separation one can attain Kṛṣṇa, how is it that he is never reunited with the gopīs despite the intensity of their love?

The original response to this problem is found in the contents of Uddhava's message in the *Bhāgavata*, which are quite different from those found in Rūpa's poem. In the *Bhāgavata*, the message Kṛṣṇa sent via Uddhava (10.47.29–37) consists of what is often referred to as *adhyātma-śikṣā*.<sup>30</sup> Kṛṣṇa personally delivers a similar message in his meeting with the gopīs at Kurukṣetra (10.82.40–47). In both these places, Kṛṣṇa emphasizes the impossibility of anyone's being separated from him, as he is the indwelling Supersoul in every living being and the all-pervading Brahman.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas do not deny the truth of such statements, but since for them the personal expression of the Supreme in the personality of Kṛṣṇa supersedes the other features of the Godhead, namely Paramātmā and Brahman, such an explanation does not give satisfaction and they take the gopīs' responses to be proof of this. The language of *aśvarya*, if not Monism, which pervades these instructions to the gopīs is seen by the Gauḍīya commentators such as Sanātana and Jīva as an anathema to the personalism of true bhakti. Such teachings belong to the realm of *jñāna* and are not to be considered beneficial even for the ordinary devotee. How much less appealing they must then be for the most exalted of Kṛṣṇa's devotees, the gopīs! It certainly does them no good to hear that Kṛṣṇa is present in a spiritual form when they feel his physical absence so intensely.<sup>31</sup>

Another response to the problem is found in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, where we read that Mahāprabhu explicitly told Rūpa "never to take

Kṛṣṇa out of Vṛndāvana,"<sup>32</sup> by which he meant that whatever the appearances, Kṛṣṇa never abandons his devotees nor his abode. This instruction was apparently given while Rūpa was writing his play *Lalīta-mādhava*, which extensively describes the departure of Kṛṣṇa from Vraja. To accomodate Mahāprabhu's instruction, Rūpa Gosvāmī made numerous changes in his play, concluding with Yogamāyā Ekānāmīśā's announcement that these events were all a hallucination which she had created for the sake of pastimes. In fact, neither Kṛṣṇa nor the gopīs had ever left Gokula.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, though descriptions of separation form a large part of Rūpa Gosvāmī's work, he made a point of also including a caveat in at least his theoretical writings to the effect that the *viraha* he himself had described was done so according to the *prakaṭa* manifestation, but that in reality (the *aprakaṭa-prakāśa*) Kṛṣṇa was always united with his eternal associates.<sup>34</sup>

But this solution to the problem of Kṛṣṇa's separation from the gopīs has also proved unsatisfactory to Gauḍīya theologians. In his great work on the erotic devotional sentiment, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, after Rūpa has described separation (*viraha*) and before he commences to describe union (*sambhoga*), he gives the aforementioned reminder that there is in fact never any real separation of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs other than the appearance of such in the manifest (*prakaṭa*) *līlā*. In his commentary to these verses, however, Jīva Gosvāmī argues that as a rule, wherever one kind of separation, *pūrva-rāga*, etc., is described, it is always followed by the corresponding form of union. If no such union were to follow, then the aesthetic experience would be incomplete. The existence of a description of separation demands a parallel description of union. As even the mundane poeticians say, "Not without separation can union be fully experienced,"<sup>35</sup> the corollary of which is that without union, separation alone does not bear the fruit of sacred rapture.

The solution of simultaneous union is also rejected on this basis, for even if it were accepted that the gopīs were enjoying union with Kṛṣṇa in one manifestation, their experience of separation in the world of the incarnation was sufficiently real for even Kṛṣṇa himself to acknowledge their suffering (10.46.6). No description of any suffering at all would be possible if the happiness of union were a reality, consciously being experienced by the gopīs while only apparently undergoing separation.

Jīva reminds us that Rūpa Gosvamin wrote UN on the basis of the manifest *lilā*, as he did his plays and other books. He was similarly seen to worship Kṛṣṇa according to that manifestation. Furthermore, Śuka's own absorption in the *prakaṣa-lilā* is self-evident. The revelation of the exalted position of the *prakaṣa-lila* is also the purpose of Brahma's words:

*prapañcam niṣprapañco 'si viḍambayasi bhū-tale*  
*prapanna-janatānanda-sandobam prathitum prabho*

"Though you are untouched by the world, you imitate the activities of the world in order to give great amounts of pleasure to those who are surrendered to you."<sup>36</sup>

Even acknowledging the simultaneous existence of the *nitya-lilā*, Kṛṣṇa's activities of being born, etc., alone bring great amounts of pleasure to the devotees. If Rūpa did not prefer the *prakaṣa-lilā* to the *aprakaṣa*, says Jīva, then what would have been gained by extensively describing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's separation, which is of a painful nature? The activities of the incarnation would be seen as a source of distress rather than joy! To avoid any such misunderstanding, therefore, Rūpa ends his study of the *madhura-rasa* in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*

with a description of the various kinds of union, culminating with the *saṁṛddhimat*, or "enriched," union, just as though he did not know the simultaneously existing, felicitous situation in the eternal *līlā*.<sup>37</sup>

This *saṁṛddhimat sambhoga* is described in Rūpa's play, *Lalita-mādhava*, where after long separation, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are finally united. Furthermore, the Gosvāmīs also analyzed the internal evidence of the *Bhāgavata* and more explicit statements in other Purāṇic texts, coming to the conclusion that Kṛṣṇa ultimately did return to Vraja after an absence of many years.<sup>38</sup> This interpretation is at the basis of Jiva Gosvāmī's magnum opus, *Gopāla-campū*, in which he not only elaborately describes this momentuous event, but also Kṛṣṇa's wedding with the gopīs, whose previous marriage to the cowherds is shown to be just another illusory feature of the manifest pastimes. As the idea of Kṛṣṇa's return to Vraja became an article of faith for the Gauḍīyas, it became a feature of all presentations of Kṛṣṇa's *māthura-līlā*. Thus, those authors who translated *Hamsadūta* into Bengali verse inevitably added an epilogue in which Kṛṣṇa responds to the message of the swan by returning to Vraja to be with his beloved Rādhā.

Since the desire of the gopīs and Kṛṣṇa to be united with one another in the *prakaṣa-līlā* is undeniable, Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī advises the devotee against a misguided preference for the *līlā* of separation, for this would not be a sign of love, but rather a sign of selfishness, since one would be neglecting the wishes of Kṛṣṇa and his beloved gopīs themselves. In saying this, Jiva appears to have been anticipating a line of argument which states that separation is an exalted state, pleasurable in itself without any reference to union.

Though Caitanya by his example may well be the ultimate source of such a doctrine, it is Rūpa who appears to first take such a position in the written word. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, he states that though

the various *vyābhicāri-bhāvas* and *anubhāvas* may appear to be symptomatic of happiness and distress like the equivalent emotional manifestations resulting from the transformations of the material qualities, since they are experienced in relation to Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇānvayāt*), they are all transcendently joyful experiences and to be called "hot" or "cool" rather than "distressful" or "pleasurable."<sup>39</sup> Sanātana Gosvāmī too, in his *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*, stresses the inherently blissful quality of separation, stating that it is even greater than that of union. There, Kṛṣṇa actually thanks Nārada for inflaming the pain he feels at being distanced from the gopīs. Though Sanātana hints at the even greater joy of ultimate reunion which is eventually to take place,<sup>40</sup> he never actually describes such a reunion in *BṛBhāg*, leaving such a conclusion to the imagination of the reader (as does *BhP* itself). Jīva, in his commentary on the above-mentioned BRS verses, however, takes the position that it is precisely the ending of the apparent distresses in union which makes them "pleasurable;" he does not seem to find them pleasurable in their own right in the way that the later commentator Viśvanātha Cakravartī does.<sup>41</sup>

Viśvanātha argues that the distress of separation is compensated for by the intense consciousness of Kṛṣṇa and is therefore as blissful as union (*kṛṣṇasya sphuraṇa-mayatvād viśādādayo'pi tādṛśa-sukhamayā eva jñeyāḥ*). He gives the famous example first found in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 2.50–51): "It is like the eating of heated sugar-cane. Though the mouth burns, one cannot give it up because of the sweet taste." *Biśāmṛta ekatre milan*, "It is like an ecstatic mixture of ambrosia and poison, which can neither be tolerated nor given up."<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, the two poems which are being presented here in this volume show how the intense consciousness of Kṛṣṇa produces this ecstatic state. It is interspersed with minor experiences of union, all

of which are considered real because of the divine nature of the object of love. They include *sphūrti*, *prādurbbhāva*, *svapna-sambhoga*, and *āgati*.<sup>43</sup> *Sphūrti* refers to the temporary hallucinations, or dream visions, of the beloved in which the experiencer is partially or entirely aware of the illusory nature of the vision. *Āvirbbhāva* is a more solid type of hallucination which deceives the experiencer in a waking state. *Svapna-sambhoga* is union in dreams. In *Uddhava-sandeśa* 124, Kṛṣṇa denies the illusory nature of dream visions. Though these states of partial reunion are sources of ecstasy, they are not equal to the pleasure of *saṃrddhimat-sambhoga*, which arrives with *āgati* when the beloved factually returns. Naturally, for Jīva, all aspects of Kṛṣṇa consciousness are blissful (*susukhaṁ kartum avyayam*), but he does not flinch from insisting that a final union is the ultimate and necessary goal, both in individual practice and in the exemplary *līlā*.

### De's critique of Rūpa Gosvāmi's writings

Since S. K. De is one of the few modern scholars to have attempted a critique of Gauḍīya *kāvya*, it may not be untoward to discuss his assessment of that body of work and Rūpa in particular. Consciously or unconsciously, De writes with the optic of a modern man applying today's literary standards to the literature of another age. For him, Kālidāsa is the unique bright spot in Sanskrit literary history and the language has only known decline since his time. The innumerable poets who inevitably used Kālidāsa as their model were imitators in whom there was little or no originality. About the Gauḍīya writings, though he admits that "the apotheosis of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legend, with all its paraphernalia of impassioned beatific sports, was, no doubt, a literary gain of immense importance and lifted the devotional literature from the dead level of speculative thought to the

romantic richness of an intensely passionate experience," he qualifies that judgment:

But very soon, subtle scholasticism laid its cold, dry fingers upon the spontaneous blooming, not only of the regular Vaiṣṇava Kāvya but also of the devotional Vaiṣṇava Stotra; and the incubus of a long-established literary tradition retarded the growth of independent form and expression. As a result, rhetorical nicety and psychological refinement came to dominate. The technical analysis and authority of the older Poetics and Erotics had already evolved a system of meticulous classification of the ways, means and effects of the erotic sentiment, and established a series of rigid conventionalities to be expressed in stock poetic and emotional phrases, analogies and conceits. To add to this, the neo-Vaiṣṇava theology and theory of sentiment brought in a further mass of well-defined subtleties and elegancies. Neither the regular Vaiṣṇava Kāvya nor the Stotra could, therefore, escape refined artificiality of sentiment and expression, as well as inevitable monotony arising from similar themes and motifs, similar series of words and ideas and similar method and treatment."<sup>44</sup>

As is clear from the above passage, though De allows himself to occasionally throw a few roses to the Vaiṣṇava poets, crediting them with "rare and pleasing charm, luscious exuberance of pictorial fancy and a mood of sensuous sentimentality," it is rare to find a sentence of praise which is not tempered with reminders that, overall, he finds in the entire corpus of Vaiṣṇava poetry (to cite but a few of his favored expressions) only artificial, labored, extensive, repetitious works of massive erudite fancy, conventional in idea and imagery, filled

with mere formalism, emotional triviality, and mediocrity, etc.

We should not be surprised, then, to hear him damn Rūpa's two *dūta-kāvya*s with faint praise before going on to damn them more directly: "Although they are not burdened with didactic and doctrinal matter, it cannot be said that they are more original or less artificial compositions than the professed devotional *kāvya*s of the Caitanya sect, which we have reviewed above. Their very form, as well as the fact that they are obvious imitations, encourages artificiality. They are like innumerable other poems of the same type, plainly literary exercises and their interest lies not so much in their absolute poetical worth as in their utilization, in an unoriginal epoch, of the original form and motif of sending a love-message in a different way and for a different purpose. They illustrate the literary variation that can be worked by clever and industrious talent which could not imitate nor reproduce the inimitable poetic spirit of Kālidāsa's little masterpiece."<sup>45</sup>

About the *Uddhava-sandēśa* specifically, he writes: "It is perhaps a more appealing poem [than *Hamsadūta*] in the tender quality of its description of reminiscent love, although the vividness and reality of the emotion are still obscured by the conventional banalities of rhetoric and sentiment." He cites US 86 as a "graceful passage," but then counters with US 99 as an example of what he does not like: "stanzas elaborately working out metaphorical conceits." We will take a closer look at that particular verse further on.

### Modern and classical literary sensibility

One feels somewhat obliged to acquiesce to Professor De's forcefully expressed opinions under the weight of his erudition and well-deserved reputation. Nonetheless, we must keep in mind the lavish



praise Rūpa received from his contemporaries and consider the difficulties in approaching these works with the preconceived notions absorbed in a very different cultural milieu. Indeed, De clearly shows the bias prevalent in European schools of his own age.<sup>46</sup> His studies of 19th century Bengali literature reveal that he was a modernizer.<sup>47</sup> It is thus perhaps not difficult to understand that the defects of the long standing classical tradition were far more apparent to him than its virtues.

Fortunately, a newer tradition of Sanskrit literary criticism has grown up in the West since Professor De, one which attempts to evaluate *kāvya* on the basis of its own theory and readership while recognizing the gulf which separates modern sensibility from the classical. "The path to a proper understanding of Sanskrit poetry must begin with Sanskrit poetry itself," writes Ingalls, "with trying to understand and if possible to reproduce its specifically poetic effects... If we are finally to condemn Murāri and Rājaśekhara it must not be by a Western theory of drama which those Indian authors never professed, but by the principles of mood and suggestion which they claimed to follow."<sup>48</sup>

Though the question of the cross-cultural comparison of literature forms a field of study in its own right, we may consider some of the salient differences between the modern and classical frames of reference. In a passage which concludes "Kālidāsa, in short, could not have imagined an audience composed of readers like us," Leonard Nathan makes a number of interesting points: "Where we look for close adherence to psychological and physical reality, the Indian poet rigorously excludes verisimilitude. Where we expect the poet to speak in his own voice—a voice that should be at once close to common speech and yet identifiably original—the Indian poet stays

far behind his subject and strives at every turn for uncommon eloquence which yet deliberately echoes the voices of his tradition. Where we are prepared for, if not direct conflict, at least strong tension needing drastic resolution, the Indian poet gives us the slow unfolding of a foregone conclusion. Where we might hope to feel the pleasure of a new insight, the Indian poet wants his audience to experience the delight of a foreknown universal sentiment... The poet is asked to proffer the experience of the ideal, all the flaws of nature corrected, all the unfinished aims of men completed, everything in its proper place, performing its proper function in an orderly, therefore beautiful way..."<sup>49</sup> "The favored topics in all instances are wonders of a sort, that is, matters susceptible to the rhetoric of praise."<sup>50</sup>

At the basis of much of De's criticism is the Sanskrit poet's lack of originality. Nathan admits that "the Sanskrit author cared little for novelty; it was not his aim to keep his audience attentive by giving it new information, but rather by richly exploring old subjects." This may present problems, as Ingalls also allows: "When a tradition is worked on for two thousand years, it accumulates a dangerous stock of easy beauty. But no poetry would fare well if we were to judge its conventions by the use to which tired hands may put them."<sup>51</sup> Even in our day, the fetish for novelty and individualism in Western literature has been called into question by one of the twentieth century's most innovative and influential poets, T. S. Eliot: "One of the facts that might come to light in this process [of literary criticism] is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predeces-

sors; we endeavor to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most rigorously."<sup>52</sup>

Though Rūpa lived in an different age from Kālidāsa, a full millennium later, he no more wrote for the modern man than Sanskrit's first great master poet. Though using Sanskrit poetry's long-standing forms and conventions, he managed to breathe sufficient life into them that a new edifice of literary works was built. He found a way to combine the literary and the love of the divine by expressing the idealization of love in their archetypal manifestation in the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The question, then, is not so much whether Rūpa Gosvāmī was a good poet, but why his poetry moved and inspired so many people, not only reviving almost single-handedly the moribund Sanskrit literature of Bengal, but also acting indirectly as a major force in building its nascent vernacular literature.

### Rasa: from aesthetic to sacred rapture

Positive aspects of Sanskrit poetry which were the measuring sticks for the connoisseurs of old and which can still be enjoyed by the modern reader are manifold: we can point to its meter, its love for multiple layers of meaning, its sonority, etc. Both Nathan and Ingalls precede their translations with excellent summaries of these aspects for the uninitiated and I heartily recommend the reader to study these essays.

The theory of language called *śphoṭa-vāda*, though universally applicable, has a recognizable influence on Sanskrit poetry. Sounds and words are said to build up to a cumulative effect which is not

realized until the final pieces of the puzzle fall into place. Since Sanskrit is a highly inflected language, the poet enjoys a license for almost infinite variations of word order and can still count on word-ending and context to clarify grammatical relations. Powerful meters carry the words forward inexorably, but the tension resulting from the simultaneous strong and easy flow of a verse's sound and the obscuring hesitation of its significance create exciting possibilities. These oppositions play off against each other just as a composer plays one melody off against another, deepening interest by controlled complication until reaching the final diapason.<sup>53</sup>

As noted earlier, each verse stands on its own, like "a well-cut diamond," each word and trope carrying its own panoply of suggestions until the final overall mood, or *rasa*, is created. Thus, though skill in meters and alliteration are regarded as virtues (*guṇa*) in poetry, just as the skillful use of figures is considered an ornament (*alaukikāra*), these are not the soul of poetry. That honor belongs to *rasa*.<sup>54</sup>

In Sanskrit poetry, the goal is to create *rasa*, described as "a blissful state, liberated from the impurities of personal involvement" (Nathan, 10) or "a revelation of the essential meanings of things, specifying only that those meanings must fit within pre-established conventions." (Ingalls, 22) Though the starting point for experiencing this universal mood is one's personal emotion, that limited personal feeling is transcended in the aesthetic experience of *rasa*. Thus Ingalls points out the impersonal character of most traditional Sanskrit verse, i.e., its lack of reference to specific individuals.<sup>55</sup>

The classical work on poetics, *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, by the 14th century Orissan scholar Viśvanātha Kavirāja, defines *rasa* and the process for experiencing it as follows:

A few special persons possessed of the critical faculty (*pramāṭṛ* or *sahṛdaya*), from a condition of mental clarity born of freedom from the pulls of desire and distress (*sattva*), are able to relish the mood produced by poetry, which is (1) *akhaṇḍa-sva-prakāśānanda-cinmayaḥ*: "a state of pure consciousness, uninterrupted, self-revealing, and joyful"; (2) *vedyāntara-sparśa-śūnya*, "void of any external sensation"; (3) *brahmāsvāda-sahodaraḥ*, "the twin sibling of the experience of Brahman" and (4) *lokottara-camatkāra-prāṇa*, "possessing transcendental astonishment as its essence."<sup>56</sup>

Quoted in *Sābitya-darpaṇa* is Dharmadatta's verse: "The essence of *rasa* is everywhere perceived as being astonishment. Because of this, the basic attitude of all aesthetic rapture is wonder."<sup>57</sup>

The affinity between the spiritual experience of Brahman and the aesthetic rapture of *rasa* is noteworthy; both require *sādhana*. The poeticians of ancient India recognized that the quasi-divine mood or *rasa* which is experienced at the reading of poetry is not simply the result of a poet's talent or *kāvya-śakti*, but that of both his own and his audience's present-day culture. Kavi Karṇapūra describes the superior poet in his *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* as one who through combining his learning in the poetic arts with his god-given talent is able to produce *rasa*.<sup>58</sup> The same applies to the sympathetic audience, or *sahṛdaya*: the relishing of *rasa* is the purview of a few souls who have the *prāktana-saṁskāra*, i.e., who have been born with the talent and appropriate good fortune, as well as an *ādhunika-saṁskāra*, or present-day culture. Thus the Vaiṣṇava poet Rasikottama writes:

A superior poet's verse is like a blossoming, fragrant lotus. Its words are like its petals, their meaning its whorl, and the sug-

gested meaning its fragrance. Two or three *rasikas* are like the bumblebees who relish the honey sweetness of this lotus poem.<sup>59</sup>

Out of the rather radical insight that personal religious experience is not dissimilar to the aesthetic effects of poetry, Rūpa Gosvāmī developed his theory of *bhakti-rasa*. For Rūpa Gosvāmī the problem of the divine aesthetic experience is double, for one must be both a *bhakta* and a *sahṛdaya* to experience "sacred rapture." Thus, not only is there a general problem for modern Western man or woman to enter the world created by Sanskrit literature in order to experience "aesthetic rapture" as a *sahṛdaya*, but he or she must also take another step to understand how it is sacred rapture for the devotee.

In the innumerable works on aesthetics  
the arts of love are described  
to such an extent that the mundane dilettante  
cannot conceive even an atomic particle of them.  
Even so, those arts in their entirety seem as nothing  
in the love sports ocean  
of the Divine Couple:  
Rādhā and the undefeated Kṛṣṇa.<sup>60</sup>

The crux is faith. It must be remembered that for the Vaiṣṇava who reads a poem about Kṛṣṇa's loves, awareness of the underlying theme of his supreme Godhead is never far away. Without *siddhānta* (theology), *bhakti-rasa*, the divine goal of Kṛṣṇa-conscious poetry, is never achieved. Indeed, these poems are meant to bring about not a literary, but a devotional sentiment, which though analogous is not the same entity. The former, because recalling mundane emotion, is material and defective, the latter transcendental and liberating, just

as the analogous experience of Brahman is considered limited and defective by the Vaiṣṇava because of its impersonality.

Though in its highest form, devotional sentiment feigns ignorance of Kṛṣṇa's divine status, ultimately this knowledge runs like an undercurrent through all Kṛṣṇa-conscious writing. The relation of Kṛṣṇa's "god-ness" (*aiśvarya*) to his "sweetness" (*mādhurya*) or "human-ness," to use Jīva's example, is that of the Sarasvatī to the Ganges at Trivenī: it cannot be seen but its currents are known to flow there outside the range of vision.<sup>61</sup> Put another way, Kṛṣṇa's *mādhurya* makes loving intimacy with him possible, but this great prize would have no meaning without his *aiśvarya*, for he would then be reduced to mere humanity. Nevertheless, it is matters related to Kṛṣṇa's *mādhurya*, because of their greater potential for the emotional response or *rasa*, which are far more important to the Vaiṣṇavas, and this concern must be borne in mind whenever reading their literature.

For Rūpa and his followers, the Sanskrit language and its poetic conventions were tools to be used in the service of *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, indeed this was their ultimate purpose and their fulfillment. For this reason, defective poetry was never to be criticized for its stylistic or grammatical insufficiencies. Caitanya Mahāprabhu himself is said to have told his guru Īśvara Purī: "Anyone who finds any fault with a devotee's description of Kṛṣṇa is a sinner. If a devotee writes a poem, no matter how poorly he does it, it will certainly reflect his love for Kṛṣṇa. A fool says *viṣṇāya* while a scholar knows the correct form is *viṣṇave*, but Kṛṣṇa accepts the sentiment in either case. If anyone sees a fault in such mistakes, the fault is his, for Kṛṣṇa is pleased with anything the pure devotee says. You too describe the Lord with words of love, so what arrogant person would dare criticize anything that you have written?"<sup>62</sup>

Thus, for the devotees, the process for achieving the rapturous state is somewhat different. Rūpa Gosvāmī describes the preparation of the *bhakti-saḥrdaya* in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

For those whose faults have been entirely removed by the performance of devotional practices and whose minds are peaceful (making them suitable for the appearance of pure goodness's special features) and effulgent (and thus equipped with full knowledge), who are attached to hearing the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and who find happiness in the association of devotees, for whom the joy of service to Govinda has become the *raison-d'être* of their existence, and who are always engaged in the most confidential process of developing love for Kṛṣṇa, namely hearing and chanting about his qualities and pastimes, have a love (*rati*)<sup>63</sup> for Kṛṣṇa which is effulgently manifest due to the conditioning of both the past and previous lives. This love, which is an embodiment of the divine joy, becomes experienced as *rasa*.<sup>64</sup>

What is more, this experience is had without exclusive dependence on the quality of the poetry or dramatic performance being witnessed as is the case in material aesthetic experiences, but simply due to the different inspirators, etc., connected with the person of Kṛṣṇa. It might be said that there are three levels of poetic appreciation for a devotee. The first calls for him to relish poetry directly related to Kṛṣṇa. In the second, exemplified by Mahāprabhu and the verse from *Kāvya-prakāśa*, love poetry of any kind reflects Kṛṣṇa's loves, as he is the archetypal lover. This attitude is reflected in Rūpa's own *Padyāvalī* where many verses from Amaru and other sources of traditional love poetry have been brought into relation with Kṛṣṇa,



just as he did with his *priyaḥ so'yam* verse. Since Sanskrit poetry seeks universalization of the theme, this is not such a distant jump. At the highest level of devotional achievement, however, poetry is no longer necessary at all as the *sthāyi-bhāvas*, etc., have been interiorized to such an extent that the whole creation becomes an *uddīpana* for tasting *rasa*. Mahāprabhu is of course the example of this. He saw every hillock as Govardhana, every flower garden as Vṛndāvana, and every body of water as the Yamunā.

### Towards an objective assessment

So far, the gist of my argument has been that the problem of poetry appreciation is mainly one of subjectivity—and that an unsurpassable distance separates the modern person, the uncultivated person, and the nondevotee from the poetry of Rūpa Gosvāmī. But such arguments, though not without validity, do an injustice to both Professor De and his capacity to make legitimate criticism as well as to Rūpa Gosvāmī, by failing to establish what I feel is his rightful claim to a place of honor in the history of Sanskrit literature. It is a real slap in the face to consider him a mere technician, without fully acknowledging his deep feeling and the ultimate concern he had for his subject matter, what to speak of his ability to transmit these in his work. I may also have undermined my argument by intimating that the devotee's ability to criticize is impaired by a favorable bias toward any poetry, good or bad, dealing with Kṛṣṇa.

But we have also argued that we must know Rūpa by the standards to which he would have been held by his peers, not by our contemporaries. The rarity of poets of exceptional talent is admitted even by those within the Sanskrit tradition—Caitanya offered solace to the Digvijayī that flaws can be found even in the works of

masters like Bhavabhūti, Kālidāsa, and Jayadeva.<sup>65</sup> So, how can we objectively judge Rūpa? Is he the *uttama-kavi* described in the Karṇapūra verse cited earlier?

Perhaps a useful starting point is the verse (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Antya 1.198) quoted above in which Mahāprabhu expressed his appreciation of Rūpa's talents. There, he specified three characteristics of Rūpa's poetry: *madhura*, *prasanna*, and *sālaṅkāra*. *Madhura* and *prasanna* refer to two of the *guṇas*, or virtues, by which the poeticians judge Sanskrit verse, i.e., *mādhurya* and *prasāda*.<sup>66</sup> *Mādhurya* is defined as *ukti-vaicitryam*, or a grace of style characterized by the absence of long compounds and *sandhi*. Composition which contains alliteration or similar sound and is free from vulgarity. Mammaṭa calls it "that excellence which brings delight (*āhlāda*) to the mind and makes it melt (*druti-kāraṇam*)."<sup>67</sup> It is a style considered especially appropriate for the compassionate and peaceful moods, as well as the erotic mood in separation. The "unpedantic eloquence" of Kālidāsa, unusual in its relative simplicity compared to the work of many other Sanskrit poets, is *mādhurya*. Rūpa handles meters effortlessly and his syntax is straightforward. His use of alliteration is sufficient for euphony, but never distracting by its excess.

*Prasāda* is again defined in *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* as *artha-vaimalyam*, "lucidity, perspicuity, clearness of style." Mammaṭa describes it as that quality which is all-pervading in a poem like fire in dry wood, by which he means that all superfluity is avoided, as is structural laxity; no element of the verse does not contribute to the poetic mood.

*Alaṅkāras*, or literary ornaments, are of two types, *śabda* and *artha*. *Śabdālaṅkāra* refers to the various types of alliteration and other sonorous effects, while *arthalāṅkāras* are the tropes which embellish any poetical work: metaphors, similes, periphrasis, hyperbole, etc.<sup>67</sup> These

embellishments had been so analyzed and differentiated by the poeticians that by the 14th century, 77 were enumerated in *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*.<sup>68</sup> If we consider their various subdivisions and combinations, there are several hundred of these tropes.

Mahāprabhu stated significantly not only that Rūpa had mastered these three characteristics, but that without them, *rasa* can neither be effectively produced nor distributed. Kaṇṇapūra also stated that the *uttama-kavi* is one who not only is capable of assembling the necessary stylistic components, but who can produce that rather more elusive sign of the creative talent, aesthetic mood. If boiled down, the essence of De's critique is that this is not so, that the *rasa* in Rūpa's work is obscured by complex ornaments, whereas Mahāprabhu and his followers would hold that the opposite is in fact true. Rūpa's verses are lucid, even when he uses elaborate figures and apparently obscuring elements like *śleṣa* (paranomosia). Interestingly enough, one of the types of Sanskrit which has been much praised from the time of Anandavardhana in *Dhvanyāloka* are those suggestive (*dhvani*) stanzas known as *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya śṛṅgāra*, "in which the charm of the suggested sense is not more striking than that of the expressed one." Puns are an integral feature of this type of poem, and we find several verses in *Uddhava-sandēśa* (51–62) written in this style.<sup>69</sup> These verses in the *Uddhava-sandēśa* are examples of flirtatious humor compatible with the erotic mood. Though not strictly following the classical situation of *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya śṛṅgāra* (that of a subtly hinted proposition), a similarly delightful use of *śleṣa* is found in the verses to Kṛṣṇa's ten *avatāras* found in *Haṁsadūta*.

Surprisingly, De has himself referred to such a verse using *śleṣa* (*Haṁsadūta* 136) in a positive light as "a specimen of witty application of the motif of ten incarnations to the particular context of

Rādhā's condition and the kind-hearted Kṛṣṇa's apparent indifference." The question we will ask ourselves is whether the desired mood has been created by the author or whether it has been dimmed by the use of wit:

*na rāgaṁ sarvajña kvacid āpi vidbatte rati-patīm  
mubur dveṣṭi drohaṁ kalayati balād iṣṭa-vidhaye  
ciraṁ dhyānāsaktā nivasati sadā saugata-ratis  
tatbāpy asyāṁ haṁbo sadaya-bṛdaya tvam na dayase*

"O Buddha, O omniscient one!

Rādhā has no attachment to anything;

she is inimical to the god of love

and opposes everything which interferes

with the attainment of her desired goal.

She has long been attached to meditating on you,

her only pleasure the path you have taught.

You are always merciful to all, O Lord,

yet you are not sympathetic to her. Why?"

First of all, a favored source of *bhakti-rasa*, as has been mentioned above, is the interplay of Kṛṣṇa's *mādhurya* and *aiśvarya*. That Lalitā addresses the Lord according to his ten incarnations is an immediate recognition of his *aiśvarya*. She calls Kṛṣṇa *sarva-jña*, "all-knowing," reminding him that he is not unaware of Rādhā's condition, for which he is to blame.

As the Buddha at this late date is known primarily as a teacher of renunciation and *abhiṁsā*, Rādhā is pictured trying to please him by concentrating on these qualities, even though she has in fact achieved them without any effort as the consequences of separation from her

lover. She is detached (*na rāgaṁ kvacid api vidbatte*), she "hates" *rati-patim*, the god of love, for everything which awakens the romantic mood is another thorn in her side, deepening her awareness of Kṛṣṇa's absence. She hates her own desire, which cannot be fulfilled in his absence. Lalitā, as Rādhārāṇī's representative, sarcastically transmits an undertone of ambivalence to the lover who has deserted her, as Kṛṣṇa is often identified as the transcendental Cupid (*rati-pati*).

There is a certain mockery of the practice of austerities to reach the supreme goal: Rādhā's meditation on Kṛṣṇa is uninterrupted and helpless, not forced through diligent efforts. A god normally rewards such diligent penance by giving spiritual rewards, especially a merciful deity like the Buddha. Why then does he not do so? And how much more should Kṛṣṇa be merciful to Rādhā, whose love is spontaneous and unmotivated? The concluding line with its triple repetition of the consonants *da-ya* (*sadaya-hṛdaya tvam na dayase*) effectively drives the point home.

A single item of paranomasia is sufficient to maintain this double sense throughout the verse: *sadā saugata-ratiḥ* ("always devoted to the Buddhist path") which can be read *sadāsau gata-ratiḥ* ("she has forever lost any pleasure in life").

Though the verse creates an overall mood of *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra*, there is still an element of the humor which characterizes the gopīs' relations with Kṛṣṇa. The suggestion of a wistful recollection of the days when they enjoyed bantering with him on a regular basis wafts in the background of the verse, rendering it more poignant, like an old femme fatale putting on makeup and dressing up to relive the days of her youth.

We will give one more example before ending this introduction and allowing the reader to enter directly into Rūpa's verse. Earlier it

was mentioned that S. K. De had cited a stanza from the *Uddhava-sandēśa* as an instance of all that was wrong in Rūpa's poetry (page 24 above). I thought it might do well to examine it more closely to see whether the *rasa* has been obscured by Rūpa's use of an elaborate metaphor based on the double-meaning of the word *jivana*, taken either as "life" or "water":

*akrūrākhye hṛtavati haṭhāj jivanam mām nidāghe  
vindantinām mubur aviralākāram antarvidāram  
sadyaḥ śuṣyan-mukha-vanarubhām vallavi-ḍirghikāṇām  
yāsām āśā-mṛdam anusṛtāḥ prāṇa-kūrmāḥ vasanti*

When Akrūra suddenly stole me, their life, away,  
like the summer sunshine  
evaporating the waters of a lake,  
they searched for me,  
calling out for me in such a way  
that it split their hearts in two.  
Their lotus faces quickly dried up;  
their life airs, like turtles burrowing  
in the mud of a dried up lake,  
survive on hope alone.

In the above translation, I have rendered it as a series of similes, perhaps a tacit agreement with De that it is difficult to sustain a metaphor which has six different points of comparison: Kṛṣṇa as water, Akrūra (separation) as the sun, the gopīs as the lakes, their faces as the surrounding vegetation, their will to live as turtles, and hope as the mud in the bottom of the lake. However, despite the complexity of the idea, it is conveyed clearly. More importantly, the

overall picture of the pond drying out and cracking in the summer sun, and the turtles burrowing in the patches of remaining mud is a delightful one. It draws on the resources that nature provides—the natural image (*svabhāvokti*) is strong in the context of Bengal with its annual cycle of rainy and dry seasons which leave many water creatures trapped and struggling to survive in drying out waterholes. The name *akrūra* never ceases to have its mocking sense of "non-cruel" or, as some pundits have explained, "one than whom no one is crueler"—an apt epithet for the relentless summer sun. The use of both the word *baṭhāt* ("forcefully, suddenly") and *sadyaḥ* ("immediately, suddenly") suggest the rapidity with which the onset of the hot season evaporates the waters which have remained fairly stable throughout the colder season with its dews.

Rūpa has played with the image of hope as a sustenance for life in several verses throughout the two works and seems to be searching for an image which clearly conveys the tension between hope and hopelessness that is at the heart of lengthy separation. Here, the suggestion is that the hope is rapidly fading—the little water that moistens the turtles' refuge will not last much longer in the continued onslaughts of drought. Whether the metaphor is so complex or farfetched that the aesthetic mood has been destroyed, the reader will have to decide.

### Conclusions and thanks

In concluding this introduction, I would like to apologize for my personal deficiencies in attempting such a translation. The well-known maxim that to translate is to betray seems especially applicable when translating Sanskrit devotional poetry. When asked for a definition of poetry, Robert Frost said, "Poetry is what

gets lost in the translation." I can make no claims to be a poet, and thus fear that much has no doubt been lost. As for being a devotee, my shortcomings are widely known and have no need of further advertising.

As S. K. De's criticisms of Gauḍiṃa Vaiṣṇava literary efforts reveal, the cultural divide which separates us today from Rūpa Gosvāmi is wide. In my feeble way, I have tried to redeem him in this introduction. In my translation, I have done my utmost to preserve the poetic value of the original as well as its devotional spirit, so that it will be relishable for both students and devotees. In this endeavor, I would like to thank my predecessors in the art, the *pūrvā-sūris*. In particular, Daniel H. H. Ingalls' name should again be mentioned with thanks, as his pioneer work in translating Sanskrit poetry has made it accessible to the Western public and has served as a model for most of those who have followed him. I also thank all those other translators whose mastery of English has given fruit to their studies of that "singularly beautiful speech" that is Sanskrit.<sup>70</sup>

For the text of *Uddhava-sandēśa*, I have used Jivānanda Vidyāsagara's 1888 Bombay edition of *Kāvya-saṃgraha*. Where possible, this has been corrected against the readings found in Viṣṇudāsa's commentary to the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which contains about 80 of the 131 verses. The text of *Hamsadūta* was taken from Kusumasarovarawālā Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī's fine edition of 1958, which contains a very helpful gloss by Gopāla Cakravartī written in 1596 of the Śaka era (1674 AD).

An earlier version of this translation of *Hamsadūta* was published by myself in Navadvīpa in 1976. I am happy to be able to make many corrections to that edition and to further improve upon it by adding an introduction, notes, etc. The addition of its beautiful sister poem, *Uddhava-sandēśa*, makes this edition a wonderful contribu-



tion to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature in the English language. We sincerely pray that it will be appreciated.

I would like to give a special word of thanks to Prof. Ashok Aklujkar of the University of British Columbia who so kindly helped solve a few of the problematic verses in these two works. Above all, His Grace Swāmī B. V. Tripurāri is to be thanked for engaging me in this delightful task, and I give my prostrated obeisances to him and to all the devotees at Mandala Publishing Group, especially Vṛndāraṇya devī dāsī and Vicāru dāsa, who have made the dissemination of the works of Śrī Rūpa and his followers their service to Guru and Gaurāṅga. May the blessings of their gurus rain down upon them.

Jan Brzezinski (Jagadānanda Dāsa)



*piyūṣa-sāra-śiśirān api candra-pādān  
dbirān maranda-madburāmś ca madboḥ samīrān/  
vāñchanti ke bhuvī tathāmṛta-sindhu-pūrān  
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasaṁ nipīya //1//*

After having drunk just once  
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin's poetry,  
who on this earth desires the rays of the moon,  
said to bring the dewy essence of ambrosia?  
And who would wish  
for the sweet, dulcet breezes of spring  
or the waves of the ocean  
of the nectar of immortality?

*paśyanti ke sura-bali-ramaṇīyatām tām  
mandākinī-vikaca-kāñcana-padma-lakṣmīm/  
sampūrṇa-śārada-sudhākara-maṇḍalam vā  
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasaṁ nipīya//2//*





After having drunk just once  
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin's poetry,  
who would look upon the beauty  
of the garden of the gods,  
or upon the beauty of blooming golden lotus flowers  
in the Ganges of the heavens,  
or upon the disc of the full moon of autumn?

*ke vā rasāla-mukuleṣv ali-jhaṅkṛtāni  
śṛṇvanti kinnara-vadbhū-kala-kaṇṭhi-nāḍān/  
kuñjeṣu mañju-kala-kokila-kūjitaṁ vā  
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasanī nīṇya//3//*

And of those who have drunk just once  
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin's poetry,  
who would still listen to the sweet buzzing  
of the bees as they taste the mango flowers,  
or to the song of the wives of the heavenly choir,  
or the sweet song of the koil in the forests?

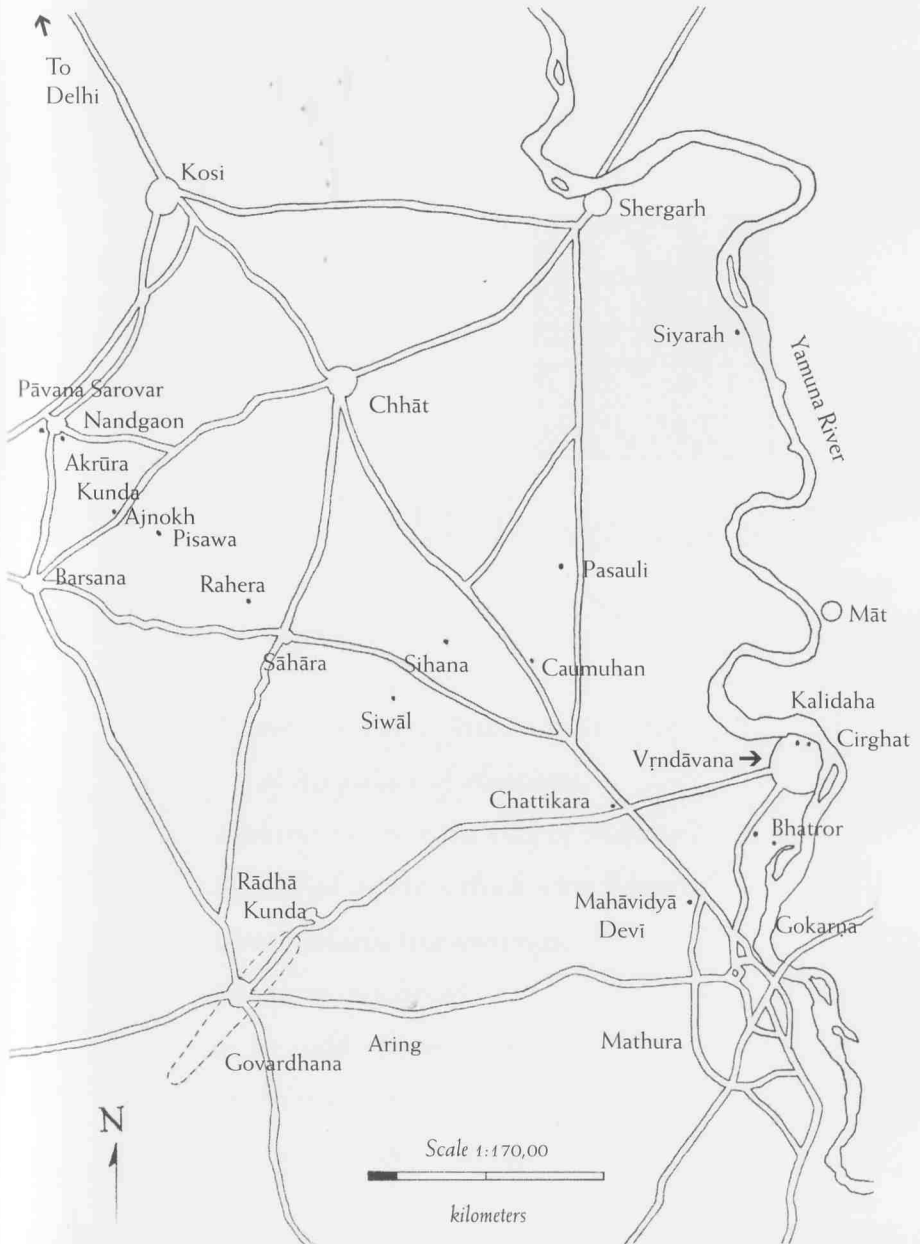


## Abbreviations

BhP	<i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i>
BṛBhāg	<i>Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta</i>
Brk	<i>Bhakti-ratnākara</i>
BRS	<i>Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu</i>
CC Ādi	<i>Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā</i>
CC Madhya	<i>Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā</i>
CC Antya	<i>Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya-līlā</i>
DKK	<i>Dānakeli-kaumudī</i>
GC	<i>Gopālā Campū</i>
HD	<i>Haṁsadūta</i>
LBhāg	<i>Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛta</i>
NatC	<i>Nāṭaka-candrikā</i>
PrītiS	<i>Prīti-sandarbhā</i>
Pv	<i>Padyāvalī</i>
SD	<i>Sābitya-darpaṇa</i>
UN	<i>Ujjvala-nīlamanī</i>
US	<i>Uddhava-sandēśa</i>

# Map of Vraja

with names of places in *Uddhava-sandēśa* and *Hamśadūta*





## *Uddhava-sandeśa*

(1)

*Kṛṣṇa stood effulgent on the rooftop  
of his palace of pleasures.*

*Looking out over the city of Mathurā,  
beautified by trees thick with flowers  
spread widely like awnings,  
his heart quickened  
as he suddenly thought  
of the friendship of the cowherd folk  
in their forest village.*

(2)

As he sighed deeply,  
a garland of large lotuses  
    fluttered on his chest  
and torrents of tears from his eyes  
filled the drains circling the roof.  
While he remembered the goddess of love  
manifest in the acts  
    of the cowherd girls,  
the desire which he had harbored  
for so long in his confused heart  
    made him still,  
    frozen like a statue.

(3)

Having anguished alone for a moment,  
he returned to his rooftop apartment.  
In his desire to find the other shore  
    of the ocean of troubles  
    in which he floundered,  
the killer of Kamsa turned to Uddhava,  
who stood close beside him,  
and began to speak of all that was on his mind,  
    his voice choked by a wave of love:

(4)

Of all my friends and relatives,  
you, O treasurehouse of virtue, are the foremost;

the Yādavas enjoy fixed prosperity  
 as a result of your counsel.  
 I thus have such confidence in you  
 that I shall engage you  
 in a task of great importance—  
 for duties given to the best of men  
 are always successfully accomplished.

(5)

O friend,  
 since the day I left Vṛndā's forest,  
 taken off to the city of Mathurā  
 by the son of Gāndinī  
 on arrogant King Kāṁsa's authority,  
 the cowherd girls have been caught  
 within the burning circles  
 of fires of separation  
 and are able to preserve their lives  
 only with the greatest difficulty.

(6)

There is amongst them  
 one who is the abode of my affection,  
 dearer to me than my life,  
 unequalled in all of God's creation  
 in the possession of the most potent sweetness.  
 She is able to carry the burden of her life,  
 so miserable since being distanced from me,



only by the grace of her friends  
who console her with lyrics and logic.

(7)

At the jewel-studded periphery  
of Nandiśvara, the unstirring mountain  
surrounded by flowering creepers,  
lies the suffering village of the cowherd king,  
its body bitten by the cobra of my separation.  
O best of all advisors! Word magician!  
When you arrive there, you will restore it to life  
by vibrating news of me and my instructions,  
like a snake charmer revives a snakebite victim  
by the use of spells.

(8)

There are surely many cities  
throughout the world,  
each of them blessed by my presence  
in the form of a presiding deity,  
which can sate the minds  
of devotees like yourself.  
But, my dear friend, I swear  
to you again and again  
and with all sincerity that none  
brings as much joy to my heart  
as this humble cowherd village.

(9)

Burning up in a fever  
 due to our being apart,  
 even the many-branched trees  
 in this cowherd village  
     are worn out  
 and would have sought the shelter of death,  
 were it not for the copious amounts  
 of water raining down  
 from the eyes of its people,  
     by which they are irrigated.

(10)

Even though their own sufferings are  
 as great as the mighty Meru,  
 the cowherd women are not pained by them  
 as much as they are by  
     even my slightest discomfort.  
 My dearest friend,  
 I want, therefore, that you  
 conceal from them  
 the unbearable pain  
     that I feel in their absence,  
 and simply tell them of the tremendous love  
     which binds me to them.

(11)

Brother!

I will now describe your route  
as you go toward Nandiśvara,  
the path which will be your companion;  
I take pleasure in your falling  
into the ocean of joy known as Gokula,  
for the saintly always take as their own  
the satisfactions of those dear to them.

(12)

Ahead of you, in the town,  
you will come upon  
the temple of Gokarṇa, or Śiva.  
He is the navigator  
who leads men across the ocean of suffering.  
Near to him, O wise one,  
you will discover a river  
of people burdened by desires  
flowing into the daughter of the sun,  
like the confluence of the Sarasvati.

(13)

"Coming into your line of vision  
is the artist whose flute song  
disrobes the cowherd girls—  
how fortunate you are!"

Upon my first arrival here in Mathurā,  
I was kissed by the eyes

of the women of the city,  
whose tongues were filled with words like these.

(14)

Not far from that place,  
which will fill your mind with supreme delight,  
go joyfully on to the forest of Ambikā,  
where I once delivered  
Nanda from a snake—  
and the Vidyādhara from snakehood—  
and so created an ecstatic festival  
for the cowherd girls.

(15)

O resolute one,  
remain in your chariot  
when you come to the  
Yamunā's uneven riverbank,  
torn apart repeatedly  
by Kuvalayāpīḍa's tusks  
as we did battle.  
Then go on, for a place  
which has been overrun  
by an evil person  
should not be frequented by the good.

(16)

Continue on to the right, a little higher up,  
to that king of holy places

where the riverbanks  
are beautified by waterfowl  
and innumerable flowers;  
there, by my power,  
the cowherds on one occasion,  
    the son of Cāndinī on another,  
each beheld something miraculous.

(17)

Although the sacrificing brāhmaṇas,  
having slighted me, are not close to your heart,  
pass respectfully by their doors.  
Their wives will be singing songs  
they have composed about me;  
should you feel no desire to look upon them,  
then truly you will have been  
overcome by the fatigue of travel.

(18)

Move on quickly just outside the town's suburb  
to the famed district known as Koṭikā,  
a place filled with clusters of flowering trees.  
Upon my arrival there,  
the protectress of the garden  
looked at me, and though reserved and chaste,  
smiled slightly, while her shawl slipped  
    to reveal her shoulder.

(19)

Having thus crossed the outlying areas of the town,  
you will come to the place known as Saṭṭikara,  
which is like the capital city

of the bumblebee king—  
a forest filled with flowers.  
I once spent twelve days there  
playing with Śridāman,  
carrying him on my back like a hump  
while he held onto me  
with his powerful arms.

(20)

"Foolish one! Just see,  
that blackish boy is looking at me  
and not at you!"

With these words,  
the simple village girls, pushing each other  
in open competition all around me,  
as I stood on the chariot there in Saṭṭikara,  
chose me as their husband-to-be,  
their naive eyes filled with adoring gazes.

(21)

Leaving this place, go to your left.  
You will be able to pass the fields  
growing thick with sugarcane

which surround the forest.  
Keeping the high banks of Kāliya's lagoon  
to your right,  
take the road which follows  
the numerous pools along the river,  
protected from the rays of the sun  
by overhanging vines.

(22)

Filled with colorful creepers,  
it is this path on the perimeter of the pasturing area  
along which I used to lead the cattle.  
As I followed it in the morning,  
eager to play with my friends,  
I would call the cows,  
distressed after a lonely night away from me,  
with the sweet sounds of my flute.

(23)

Bending forward,  
the enchanting wives of Vraja  
showered the flowers of their blooming cheeks  
and the blossoming buds of their laughter  
into the chariot;  
their darting glances,  
filled with the fragrance of their virtues,  
fixed on their target  
and flew toward me.

(24)

"The handsome charioteer, Mādhava,  
exudes a dense love for Rādhā,  
his eyes are filled with sadness  
as he looks toward her."

Reminded by these fervent words of the maidens  
of our unfettered amusements together,  
my body, bathed in perspiration,  
remained immobile, like a picture, in this place.

(25)

And here,  
in the coils of the great snake,  
I enjoyed a dream of pastimes  
while Rādhā massaged my lotus feet.  
In that village known as Vardhahasta,  
whose fragrance competes with that of the ocean of milk,  
and which is festooned with flags,  
I experienced the happiness of deep rest.

(26)

O brother!  
Just look at the scenery all around,  
filled with the sounds of the buttermilk being churned  
covering a distance of two yojanas—  
the sight of it will make you give praise  
to the cowherd settlement.  
There, the cows,



Brahmā's most wonderful creation,  
satisfy the entire universe  
with their copious offerings  
of divine clarified butter.

(27)

O my friend,  
then go on to the place known as Śālmalā,  
the most beautiful spot in all of Vraja,  
surrounded on all sides  
by lakhs of ponds and pools,  
where throughout the day  
as we played on every footpath, every road,  
the boys would make me display  
wondrous acts of valor.

(28)

Some distance further on from there,  
you will find the place known as Sāhāra,  
the home of Upananda,  
which will bring the joy of divine love  
to your eyes.

When the swift chariot,  
on its way to the capital,  
stopped here, with great pleasure  
we ate food cooked in ghee.

(29)

On the borders of the pasturing grounds  
 of the king of the cowherds,  
 you will arrive in great satisfaction  
 at Rahelā, famed as the place  
 where the family of gopī girls  
 exhibited a charming confusion.

On the evening  
 that I sent out my flute messenger,  
 they arrived incompletely dressed  
 and decorated.

(30)

Stealing curds from the older gopīs,  
 I would call the young animals together  
 in that same place,  
 knowing that they were hungry,  
 and would feed them  
 as though they were my friends.  
 Filled with trees,  
 this place known as Pritaśāra  
 will erase any fatigue  
 which has come to you  
 as a result of your journey.

(31)

This place, favored by gentle winds  
 in which the quivering banana trees dance,  
 delights in the scent  
 of the beautiful aśoka flowers,  
 the manifest abode of the nectar of the gods.  
 Expanding in limitless fortune,  
     beyond the worlds,  
 this land of the king of the cowherds  
     will intoxicate you with its divine nectar.

(32)

Its southern portion  
 has been given the name Vidyutkāri,  
 "lightning maker,"  
 because the gopīs,  
 upon seeing me seated on the chariot  
 in the company of Akrūra,  
 there fell to the ground,  
 flickering like flashes of lightning,  
 alarmed and maddened by the onslaught  
     of imminent separation's pain.

(33)

At the place named Sauyātrikā,  
 Akrūra, upon first entering the arena  
 of the cowherd settlement,  
 his heart enveloped

in the anxiety of profound love,  
had a vision of me as his friend.  
The ecstatic tears which poured from his eyes  
caused the kadamba trees on its edges  
to blossom.

(34)

There, the boys,  
running and clapping their hands,  
make the cows, whose effulgent bodies  
equal mountains of crystal in splendor,  
abandon the tips of fresh grass  
which they sniff in passing,  
while their numerous calves  
constantly leap and jump about  
with unsteady gracefulness.

(35)

A great white rock  
stands gloriously like my throne,  
spreading the scent of flowers  
through the pasturing grounds  
in the center of my court.  
There, the cowherd girls,  
when crossing the road of my vision,  
immediately bestowed upon me  
the sweet joys of their silent,  
involuntary expression of affection.

(36)

"That is not the dust of the cows  
which you see rising before you,  
but a cloud of smoke emanating from a fire;  
nor is that the sound of a flute that you hear,  
but the rustling of bamboo  
deep in the hollow of your ears.  
Look, you crazy girl,  
the sun has not yet gone down in the west.  
Stop moving about,  
I am still painting sandalwood designs  
on your breast."

(37)

"In the distance, the flute sound is rising,  
but don't start running—the grey file  
of cows cannot yet be seen.  
Your elders are standing at the door,  
so quickly gather up your girdle,  
which has become untied  
and fallen into the milk,  
and get back inside the house."

(38)

"Ever since the early morning, O friend,  
how is it that you have been  
stringing waves of flowers  
without ever finishing that victory garland?"

O foolish one! Do you not see  
 the thick cloud of dust  
 raised by the white cows' hooves,  
 covering the sky  
 and bringing joy  
 to the peacocks of the gopīs' eyes?"

(39)

"When Hari enters the compound,  
 his gleaming body so fragrant,  
 his head garlanded by mālātī flowers  
 and covered with a net  
 made of the dust of the cows,  
 whose mind would not be filled with desire?  
 So, you loud-mouthed old woman,  
 why are you wasting your time,  
 constantly screaming at me?"

(40)

"Don't make sad eyes,  
 but leave your elders in the house  
 and come out here on the porch;  
 you are fatigued from passing the entire day  
 separated from him.  
 O tender one!  
 the charmer of the cowherd girls,  
 the handsome Mukunda,  
 will soon meet with you,

wearing his necklace of guñja berries  
and surrounded by the bees  
who drink in his bodily fragrance."

(41)

"As Śāuri enters the compound  
of the cowherd settlement,  
he is bewildered by the sound  
of your tinkling waistbells.  
Stop the mad dancing of your eyes,  
my well-dressed friend—  
what hunter sets a snare once the deer  
has been hypnotized  
by the sweet sounds of his song?"

(42)

"Your anklebells have taken on  
the cadence of passion from your movements!  
Candrāvalī, my friend, whence  
did you suddenly acquire this power  
by which you can hit a mark  
simply by making a sound?  
Just look, Upendra, upon leaving the house  
of the king of the cowherds,  
is constantly wandering  
back and forth in confusion,  
his inners pierced by this power."

(43)

"Queen Yaśodā sits in the doorway  
 of her residence, impatiently waiting,  
 brimming with motherly sentiment.  
 Quickly beautify your lotuslike face  
 with decorations of musk,  
 O fair one,  
 your divine haughty indifference  
 holds back the conqueror of Mura,  
 while stealing, from a distance, the jewel of his mind."

(44)

"Look, the staff of Kāṁsa's enemy  
 is lying on the ground;  
 his flute is slipping rapidly from his hand  
 and his unblemished horn  
 is also about to be lost.  
 Nanda is watching him from afar,  
 So Rādhā, please don't embarrass him  
 any longer—desist from casting  
 your enchanting sidelong glances!"

(45)

"Kṛṣṇa is standing  
 in the middle of the cowherd village,  
 repeatedly casting his eyes  
 on the altar of your doorstep,



his heart in his mouth.

O friend!

You have been swallowed up

by a swell of false jealousy

and are wearing yourself out,

looking at him

through your window.

Go outside and show your love

for him who is Lord of your soul."

(46)

"Look, Gaurī is making

a pretense of shyness before us;

standing in the door,

she does not move an inch

even though her hero is calling her.

Even the path to the forest bower

knows well her incomparable prowess

at mastering the difficulties in traversing it

once the playful powers of the flute

have entered into the depths of her ears."

(47)

With words such as these,

the gopīs, their beauty enhanced

by their slanted smiles,

talked helplessly and playfully about me

as I appeared there that twilight time, long ago.

This chattering, full of love

and born of varied deep feelings of the heart,  
exuded the powerful odor of unclouded desire.

(48–49)

The forest of the gopis' fingers  
flashed at double speed  
as they pulled on the churning rope.  
Perspiration wetted their cheeks,  
slight smiles decorated their mouths,  
and locks of hair fell over their foreheads.  
Like goddesses of fortune, their lotuslike mouths  
vibrated the sound of my glories.

Carelessly shaking their arms  
to create a jangling sound with their bracelets,  
they efficiently, smoothly  
churned the buttermilk.  
The cacophony made  
at the end of every night  
by these lotus-eyed beauties  
as they sang the songs  
they had composed out of great love for me  
would put an end to my slumber.

(50)

"Again and again, you instruct me  
to be harsh with the enemy of Kāṁsa.  
So, my dear friend, if it must be,  
then make a beautiful picture of my lover

and give it to me,  
so that, alone in my house,  
my ears turned inward,  
I can enjoy my night of sulking  
while happily contemplating it."

(51)

"There are many proud girls in Vraja  
whom you may find to be  
convenient playthings,  
but my friend is angry and  
you should not approach her.  
Now that she has seen you nearby  
O preceptor of the duplicitous,  
she is unleashing in her anger,  
half-moon-like scowls, like arrows."

(52)

"Don't speak to me again of that scoundrel  
who wanders on the banks of the Yamunā,  
my dear, fickle messenger,  
I am not allowed to go near him!  
I have earned my wide reputation  
for being hard-hearted,  
the goose bumps that you see  
suddenly covering my body  
have been caused by the cold winds  
of the dewy season."

(53)

"There is no need  
 for all these clever supplications;  
 you may as well stop them now.  
 My Lord, you may set up  
 your royal court here outside,  
 but don't you dare go to my front yard.  
 My poor companion, alas,  
 spent the entire night all alone,  
 awake, waiting for the one  
 who is every last cowherd woman's playboy."

(54)

"The withered flower of the mālātī  
 has fallen on the ground  
 while the lotus-navel'd one  
 stands at the door,  
 distracted and distressed.  
 O beautiful mistress,  
 you too pass your nights  
     without sleep,  
 making your friends lament.  
 I don't see how these bouderies  
     can be considered a beauty treatment."

(55)

"O black bee!  
 Why are you interfering

with my service to my husband  
by flying around,  
maddened by the desire  
to enjoy the fragrance of my lotus mouth?  
If these desires so disturb you,  
causing you to make  
this gentle buzzing sound,  
then go into that bower of white lotus flowers,  
[O elephant among men!]"

(56)

"I see a powerful lion coming—  
because I am depending on you  
who are so strong, dear friend,  
I have not gone to hide  
in a thick bower somewhere!"

"O foolish one! With me present  
you need not be afraid:  
Today, no creature can make  
the acquaintance of your breasts  
other than this yellow-robed one  
who is already ensconced in your heart."

(57)

"You made the excuse  
that we would go to pick flowers,  
and so brought me far away  
to this forest bower;

now, you cheat, what is this song  
that you are suddenly singing,  
with that smile on your face?"

"Don't waste your time in worrying,  
I am singing aloud to bring pleasure  
to the black deer of Vṛndāvana."

(58)

"I see you are going again and again  
to the Yamunā to fetch water—  
I think I understand which juice  
you are really after.  
The river is the daughter of the sun,  
the friend of the lotus flowers,  
and Kṛṣṇa has eyes like the pink lotus."

"It isn't the clear water that I desire,  
my refractory friend,  
but by going there I hope to see  
the infallible one  
smile like a blooming red lotus."

(59)

"I see that you have chosen  
to surround yourself with designing women;  
how then, my little simpleton,  
can you still hope to wrap your arms  
around Kṛṣṇa's neck?"

"Well said, my friend, but my answer is  
 that I think I can,  
 since upon seeing me in the bower  
 that amorous genius,  
 decorated with an effulgent peacock feather  
 and so arrogantly proud of his ability to subdue serpents,  
       is coming to rescue me."

(60)

"My dear girl, Candrāvalī!  
 Don't go out of the house  
 again and again in the evening  
 to look thirstily toward the fire,  
 [while searching for the path  
 by which Kṛṣṇa is to come.]"

"Since the purifying fire  
 which destroys the lifelessness  
 of every living being's heart  
 cannot be kindled today,  
 O foolish one, my delicious recipe,  
 a succulent accomplishment,  
 will not be completed tonight."

(61)

"Dear friend, I was pulled over some distance,  
 my body trembling, by Kṛṣṇa,  
 with his hands like bright red lotuses  
 and his eyes intoxicated with desire..."

"Hush, sakhi, talk quietly.

You are all confused

and your mother-in-law is loitering

just in front of you [listening to your every word]!"

"...yes, by that huge black elephant

with its gleaming tusks

there in the forest

by the banks of the Yamunā."

(62)

"As they frolick in Vṛndā's forest,

the deer have suddenly aroused in me

deep desires with their movements.

Alas, what can I do now?"

"I already know, you crafty one,

that you wish constantly

for the company of the son of Nanda."

"Don't misunderstand me, my friend,

I was only taking pleasure in the antics

of the charming spotted antelope."

(63)

Dear friend, Uddhava,

these are just a few examples

of how the gopīs,

masters of the auspicious use of words



engaged in banter in times gone by.  
Their words revealed  
the joys of love;  
they were filled with profound beginnings  
of many varied steps,  
and for all this, my ears thirsted,  
openly and unconditionally.

(64)

"O simple one!  
Who is this dark-skinned girl  
who has accompanied you?"  
"A milkmaid, like us."  
"Why has she come here?"  
"Why, to seek your friendship."  
"Consider it done. Of course  
she may be my friend."  
"Then go and embrace her."  
As Rādhā did her friend's bidding,  
she recognized me in woman's disguise  
and was immediately nonplussed,  
for she had not yet forgiven me.

(65)

There, the tall stakes  
of spotless stone,  
driven by my hand  
into the ground in great numbers  
to tie the frisky, scattering calves,

looked like a lotus garden,  
ringing the banks of a white water river.

(66)

"I don't know what cruel Fate  
has in store for the gopī girls like myself.  
What words has he written  
on our foreheads?  
The messenger who came from the king,  
O beautiful one,  
met with Mādhava in the evening  
and was repeatedly whispering to him."

(67)

"My dear girl,  
on the king of Vraja's orders,  
the crier is announcing  
throughout the cowherd village  
that Kṛṣṇa will be leaving in the morning.  
Bad omens disturb my mind;  
I don't know what the future holds!  
My right eye is again quivering!"

(68)

"O dear friend!  
When I heard that it was true  
that Kṛṣṇa was really headed for  
the capital in the morning,  
I prayed for the night to lengthen,

but look how quickly the wicked night  
 has come to its usual end  
 and the darkest of dawns has arrived,  
 bringing no auspiciousness to anyone."

(69)

"Before the son of Cāndini  
 carries out his plan,  
 I have only one humble request  
 that I would like to put before you, dear friend:  
 You know that mālinī creeper near the house  
 whose flowers I picked daily  
 to make lockets for Murari's ears—  
 please take care of it when I am gone."

(70)

"You are cursed, my friend!  
 Don't you know that a thunderbolt  
 has fallen on your head?  
 Who do you think is going to drink  
 the mixture of curds and sugar  
 that you are preparing?  
 Quick, foolish one, leave your house  
 and go out on the verandah,  
 the son of Nanda has boarded the chariot  
 and is ready to leave."

(71)

"O mother-in-law!  
 Is it true that the cowherds

have placed no obstacle in his path?  
 And that the cursed horses  
 have not injured themselves  
     by kicking up the dust with their hooves?  
 Nor that the wheels of the chariot  
     have not fallen, broken, to the ground?  
 So, is it then true that the killer of Keśi  
     is indeed leaving for Mathurā?"

(72)

Look directly before you,  
 O messenger of the king!  
 Bereft of all shame,  
 one thin-waisted beauty  
 is preparing to do something  
     incongruous, rash, and violent.  
 Until you allow Kṛṣṇa,  
 with his moonlike smile,  
 to descend from the chariot,  
 our friend will not release  
 the glittering black scimitar  
     from her grip."

(73)

"Foolish one! Open your eyes  
 and look at Hari for just another moment.  
 Are you not deceiving yourself  
 with the illusory hope that he will stay?  
 Even though he clearly hears

the tearful pleas of the chaste women before him,  
 the cruel person named "the kind," Akrūra,  
 is quickly driving the chariot away."

(74)

"Look, O thin-waisted one,  
 the grief, arising from looking at your face,  
 is causing tears to well up  
 again and again in Hari's eyes;  
 as he moves further and further away,  
 he becomes lost in the clouds of dust,  
 which spread like a false accusation,  
 raised by the great hooves  
 of the galloping horses."

(75)

"O merciless one!  
 You want to kill the cowherd women  
 by forcibly taking Kṛṣṇa away from them;  
 O son of Gāndinī!  
 Don't ruin the reputation  
 of the Yadus on this earth."  
 These were the loud laments  
 the bereaved women of Vraja  
 let loose in this place, Sauyātrikā,  
 on the day that I left  
 for the city of the Madhus.

(76)

Next, not very far from there,  
 you will arrive at a lake  
 filled with bees and bathed  
 in the fragrance of lotus flowers,  
 known as Pāvana.

The cowherd women would go there  
 on the pretext of fetching water  
 and meet with me  
 in the dense shade of the bowers  
 where we would enjoy our secret loves.

(77)

"This area surrounding Nandiśvara  
 attracts the minds of the entire universe  
 because of the footprints  
 of the conqueror of Mura  
 which cover it in every direction.

O mother!  
 As it comes into sight,  
 it burns my mind  
 with powerful flames  
 beyond my understanding.

(78)

"My beautiful one,  
 the enemy of Kāṁsa

has a muscular odor of love for you;  
either today or tomorrow,  
he will again be a beautiful ornament  
around your neck.

Like Indra's thunderbolt,  
these lamentations of yours  
are able to pierce through one's essence—  
what will you gain by going on?"

(79)

"O wretched one!

You have lost hope, I know,  
but don't waste your tears  
of compassion—

of my own volition,  
I would never give up this incomparable body,  
embraced by Kṛṣṇa.

But, since taking birth,  
the scorching heat of the fire of separation  
has forcefully pierced my soul  
and is reducing this body  
to an insignificant pile of cinders."

(80)

"You are throwing the universe  
into the ocean of misery;  
what is the use of all this grieving?  
Calm your mind, it is you  
who decided to love a traveller.  
If that rogue remembers his promise,

he will not abandon Vraja;  
 O slender one, it will then be proclaimed  
 throughout the three worlds that  
     we are without fault."

(81)

"I thought,  
 How could the enemy of Madhu  
 ever leave Gokula?  
 By tomorrow, I will easily  
 win him over again.  
 In this belief, I acted proud and haughty,  
 but what woman, alas, could have known  
 that the son of Cāndinī,  
 initiated in the art of wickedness,  
 would throw  
     a thunderbolt on our heads?"

(82)

"I have not the faintest hint  
 of love for Mukunda;  
 you should know that I am crying  
 just as a sign of my good fortune.  
 As I cannot see  
 his moonlike face or  
     the flute playing on his lips,  
 I have no reason to go on living,  
 yet I continue to preserve  
     my wormlike existence."



(83)

"I have bound my life to living  
with ever-new ropes of hope;  
by nature I am fearful—  
how many more days  
will I be able to bear like this?  
These blossoming trees of Vṛndā's forest  
remind me of our pleasures together  
and so, by force, are uprooting  
my very life essence."

(84)

"The curled, crooked gaze  
of the killer of Mura,  
containing a mixture of smiles  
and elevated by his love,  
will soothe my pain—  
it possesses a magic power  
which puts to rest  
Cupid's bow's ability to derange and distract  
and is worshipped by the proud wealth  
of his eyebrow vines' sweet movement."

(85)

"It may well be that the enemy of Kāṁsa  
is living far away from us now—  
and I fear it so forever—  
but it is not this misfortune  
which gives me the most pain,  
extraordinarily distressful though it be.

No, the stake of hope  
 which is fixed in my heart  
 and holds my life airs tied prisoner  
 causes me a suffering that is worse  
     than the heat  
     of an undersea volcano."

(86)

"When will that day come  
 when my five senses  
 will each take pleasure  
 in the son of Nanda—  
 in his lips, thick with honey filling,  
 in the cooling touch of his embrace,  
 in his body, delighting in its own beauty,  
 bursting with nectarean fragrances,  
 and a speech that starts with playful humor  
     and ends rough with desire."

(87)

"Breaking through the layers  
     of blindness,  
 smearing the area surrounding the mountain  
     with the rays of sweetness like collyrium,  
 when will the son of Nanda,  
 taking pleasure in his infinite mercy,  
 appear, playing before me,  
     stunned  
     in my increasing, heavy astonishment?"

(88)

"Bowed in propitiation, I am humbled  
by my mind which is filled with suffering;  
please bestow upon me your mercy  
in the form of a vision of your face.  
Though I am not worthy  
of the great fortune of serving you,  
I remember again and again  
the nectar of your mercy,  
and so I speak in this way."

(89)

"When will I be able to bring you  
pleasure through serving you:  
placing betel nut in your mouth,  
you abed on your amusement couch,  
fashioned in heaps of flower petals  
in the blossom-filled bower?  
Smiling and smiling,  
you will be making small talk,  
swept up, O Lord,  
in sweet love for me."

(90)

By these unbounded lamentations  
of the milkmaids,  
so pitiful in their plaintiveness,  
that place has by now  
been wounded to its very core.  
Even travellers are happy

to skirt it from afar,  
 tears welling up in their eyes,  
 their ears covered  
     with their hands.

(91)

Upon seeing your chariot  
 attached to horses  
 whose bodies are covered  
 with golden ornaments, arriving  
 at the foot of Nandiśvara,  
     doubting,  
         hoping that it is me  
         who has finally returned,  
 all of Rādhā's friends will come,  
     hurrying impetuously nearer.

(92)

Give my auspicious blessings  
 to the Vṛndāvana forests,  
 filled with honey-gathering bees.  
 Their twigs and shoots would impassion me  
 when I saw them playing the role  
 of decorations  
 on the gopīs' bodies.

(93)

Maddened by the sweet sounds of my flute,  
 the cows would come quickly,  
 freeing themselves of their calves,

overcome with emotion,  
their eyes filled with inexhaustible tears.  
Loudly calling my names,  
attract them to you,  
and then,  
gently ask them how they are.

(94)

When Brahmā stole  
the herdsmens' children,  
I took on their names and forms,  
and for a year  
drank from the breasts  
of their loving mothers.  
Communicate again and again  
my numerous obeisances,  
in all humility, at the feet  
of these elderly cowherd women.

(95)

My dear companions,  
Śrīdāman and others,  
used to bring me great joy  
when they competed with each other  
to try to touch me,  
as I went off to look at the flowered beauty  
of a distant part of the wood.  
In my name, O expert one,  
affectionately embrace each one of them  
again and again.

(96)

Once I had killed the cruel Kaṁsa  
 in the wrestling arena, O wise Uddhava,  
 I sent Nanda Mahārāja back to Gokula  
 with much pleading  
 and with hundreds of promises to return.  
 Now, O ocean of virtue,  
 you should worship his feet in great humility  
     while mentioning my name.

(97)

Then, in all modesty,  
 prostrating yourself in my name  
 with all limbs on the ground,  
 you should worship  
 the emaciated figure of a woman  
 who abuses aloud the wicked king,  
     her finger flailing;  
 her face shows the weariness  
     of incessant worry—  
 my mother Yaśodā,  
 who alone, in reality, gave me birth.

(98)

With every outgoing breath,  
 she utters the word, "alas!"  
 which she alternates  
 with the repetition of my glories.  
 Looking constantly toward the road  
 leading to the king's city,

she has become thin,  
wetting her clothes  
with the tears that she sheds:  
    this is how she spends her days.

(99–100)

When Akrūra suddenly stole me, their life, away,  
like the summer sunshine  
evaporating the waters of a lake,  
they searched for me,  
calling out for me in such a way  
that it split their hearts in two.  
Their lotus faces quickly dried up;  
their life airs, like turtles burrowing  
in the mud of a dried up lake,  
    survive on hope alone.

Approach them with hands folded in respect,  
controlling yourself completely,  
for they are my dearly beloved,  
and they have been transformed  
by the physical deterioration  
born of their anxieties.  
You should behave in this way  
because you are my messenger  
and I have caused them pain—  
the faults of the master  
are transmitted to the servant,  
    even if he himself is flawless.

(101)

Seeing you dressed in my clothes,  
 they will become perplexed  
 and whisper back and forth  
 the various possibilities,  
 their minds agitated by new and greater worries.  
 Standing in their line of vision,  
 when they have become immobile and attentive,  
 then, my friend, quietly  
 pronounce this enchanting message:

(102)

"That artist,  
 that son of the king of the cowherds,  
 whose desire for diversions  
 in the forests by the Kalindī's banks  
 knew no bounds  
 but was taken helplessly away from Vṛndāvana  
 to the king's capital  
 by the son of Gāndinī,  
 has sent me, Uddhava, his intimate confidante,  
 as a messenger to you, O exalted goddesses!

(103)

"The sighs of pain  
 have dried up the beauty of his lips;  
 he has abandoned his sports;  
 his wan cheeks have taken on  
 the brilliant white of sea foam solidified;



remembering repeatedly  
the fragrance of your virtues,  
fatigued in mind, O simple ones,  
your lover, sends you  
the following beautiful,  
but inadequate message:

(104)

'Are you still afraid of the demons  
as you were before?  
And is auspiciousness,  
resplendent, surrounding you,  
whose hearts are simple?  
And do you ever remember  
the nectarean service,  
so favorable to your minds and hearts,  
that I rendered to you in every grove  
of the forest?

(105)

'Having been dragged down to Mathurā  
by my kinsfolk,  
kept in this place by their pleas,  
bound by their careful pleadings,  
I am trying to do something  
useful while I'm here.  
Even so, O beautiful-necked ones,  
I meditate constantly on your friendship,  
ever new in its manifestations,

and pass my days here subjected  
to the pain which comes  
from the intense desire to be with you  
that cannot be fulfilled.

(106)

'The behavior of women like yourselves  
is well-known to me—

so stop!

For it is on account of you  
that I experience the great pain  
which pierces my mind.

The unpredictable love you had for me  
had me so confused  
that today I've not the courage  
to force myself to continue on  
for even another moment.

(107)

'For so long, you have been enjoying  
the ecstasies of the *rāsa* dance  
in the fragrant forests of Vṛndāvana  
with me, night after night, and yet,  
you think that it is just a dream.

And so, you crooked-hearted ones,  
you go about, accusing me  
of having left you—

have you no shame?

(108)

'Candrāvalī!

Conqueror of the three worlds!  
Taking a helping hand  
from the varieties of friendship  
found in the ends of your eyes  
as they wander in the fullness of delight,  
the lofty movements of your eyebrows  
surge onto the paths of my memory,  
and confidently cut loose my heart.

(109)

'O Viśākhā! Thin-waisted one!

Do you remember that day  
in the forest filled with blossoming branches,  
when I saw your mother-in-law arrive  
as I pulled on your skirt?  
In order to dissimulate my intentions,  
I said, "You rascal, give me back my guñja beads  
which you have hidden in your skirts—  
they are my good luck charm."

(110)

'Dhanyā! True to your name, you are fortunate:  
You rid yourself of your fatigue  
by recounting to your friends  
the perfumed tales of my amorous prowess.  
O goddess, here in the distant city,  
I meditate on these things,

though I cannot see your world here—  
and yet, despite this pain,  
I do not break the seal on my mouth.

(111)

‘O Śyāmalā!

Pregnant with secret jokes  
of maddening depth,  
your gentle chattering,  
so sweet that it destroys  
the far-flung fame of mead,  
accompanied by the smile  
which proves your elevated love—  
this is what my heart recalls  
in my desperation.

(112)

‘Padmā! The beauty of your face

is praised even by the lotus!

In a cottage of vines,

while I was feigning sleep,

you stole in secretly,

greedy to purloin my magic flute.

I snatched at your hands

and plucked at your blouse—

ah, that which we initiated

on that day

returns to me now

and grinds my heart to powder.

(113)

'O Lalitā!

In a secret place,  
 I rested your body  
 between my pillarlike arms  
 on the fragrant expanse of my chest.  
 I playfully caressed you,  
 abundantly.  
 Today, your inner worries a burden,  
 you have withered  
 and you roll in an expanse of dust.  
 How do you manage to  
 keep on drawing breath?

(114)

'O Bhadrā, you of felicitous form!

That same most-dear Kṛṣṇa who  
 nightly, there in Vraja,  
 found ever-dawning pleasure  
 in your mind-attracting service  
 is now silently bored by the courtiers of the capital,  
 who though they wait on him,  
 are new and unfamiliar with his gestures;  
     they do not understand their meaning.

(115)

'Force your eyes to remain closed,  
 my beloved friend, Devī Śaivyā.  
 You will have to endure a little longer

the suffering caused  
 by wicked Cupid's talented trickery.  
 In another two or three days,  
 I will be there to look upon  
 the sublime movements of your eyebrows  
     as they flutter with love."

(116)

Thus demonstrating your wisdom  
 in the art of appeasement,  
 remove the distress of the lotus-eyed  
 by filling their ears  
     with these nectarean messages.  
 Then, approach the one who is  
 the impetuous turtle-dove on the steeple  
     of the temple of my mind—  
 Rādhā,  
     who has been engulfed  
         by weariness of the spirit.

(117)

She is lying,  
 a sleeping beauty,  
 on bedding made of soft, fresh twigs.  
 You will see her there, wan and thin,  
 protected by her circle of friends,  
 their eyes filled with moisture.  
 One can only divine that  
 a breath of life in her still remains

by the slight movement of skin  
at the base of her throat.

(118)

You who are wise in the ways of friendship!  
Take this garland of five different colors  
with a locket of vāsanti flowers,  
which has been made honorable  
by virtue of the fragrance of my chest,  
to which it has clung.

Without this fragrance, no one will be able to  
awaken that doe-eyed girl  
who has become deeply absorbed  
in that penultimate state of love,  
so near to death.

(119)

When she returns to consciousness  
by the smell of the garland,  
her eyes, filled with mist,  
will dart in every direction without seeing.  
As her skin bristles with excitement  
in expectation of me,  
approach her quietly,  
slowly, smoothly, and gently,  
until you stand before her.

(120)

Holding the garland,  
bend forward near to the bed of shoots,

and when Rādhā's friend signals  
 with her eyebrows that you may speak,  
 humbly submit to her,  
 with love in your heart,  
 that you come as a messenger from me.  
 Then, when the time is right,  
 O intelligent one,  
 immediately begin to recount word for word  
 the following message:

(121)

"O patient one! O Rādhā!  
 He who is your guru above all others,  
 and for whom you too are guru,  
 he who is dearer to you than life itself,  
 and for whom you are  
 in the same way dear,  
 that Kṛṣṇa inflames, revives, and rekindles you,  
 O goddess,  
 by offering this message of love  
 and desire:

(122)

'O Rādhā,  
 you with the face of the goddess of fortune!  
 Accepting the decision of her lover  
 to remain far away,  
 a pious woman remains in the land of the living  
 even when her heart is cleft  
 by troubles at every step.



Just look at the mādhaṁ creeper  
that lies flowerless but alive on the ground,  
patiently awaiting the return of spring.

(123)

'When the sun of separation  
dries the lake of the heart,  
all that is left is sand;  
I know that your life, O emaciated one,  
like that of a fish,  
is caught in your throat  
    and ready to escape.  
And I, meanwhile, far away from you,  
drown in the ocean of desire!  
Unable to cross the waters  
    of luxury and pleasure,  
and held back by the forceful winds  
    of my numerous kinsfolk,  
what can I do?

(124)

'But it is not a dream  
that you have each night  
when you are united with me,  
O moon-faced one,  
behold the unfettered joy  
    which I relish!  
I now know that you possess  
some unknown magical power

which attracts me,  
 which you let loose  
 and which draws me away from  
 this entanglement with the Yadus.

(125)

'O copper-lipped Rādhā!  
 The son of Nanda, unsteady on his feet  
 from the power of his love for you,  
 humbly petitions you  
 who are already so pale:  
 Do not, under any circumstances,  
 look at that place by Govardhana,  
 overgrown with mādhavī creepers and flowers,  
 which was witness to the madness of our  
 love's highest ecstasies.

(126)

'You will suddenly see me,  
 the flute playing on my lips,  
 my body smoky with forest minerals.  
 One day, as you lie  
 in the haven of our dalliances,  
 your mind swallowed by your inner distress,  
 I will excite you from your fatigue,  
 and we will swim  
 in the streams and eddies of joy.

(127)

'On that day,  
tears pouring from my eyes  
out of my great love for you,  
I will impetuously place  
a kiss on your pale cheek;  
then, overcome by Cupid's attacks,  
I will place my arms around your neck  
and give you, my beloved companion,  
a joyous festival of embraces.'"

(128)

In this way, Uddhava,  
you who are known to be far-seeing  
should show the lotus-eyed gopis  
to the other side of the ocean of suffering  
with these profound messages of mine.  
Then, in order to continue  
to minister to them in ways  
favorable to their mental condition,  
O you of unmatched wisdom,  
you should stay in Gokula for a time.

(129)

O friend, by your voyage  
to the land of the king of the cowherds,  
it is not my highly esteemed purpose  
which will be fulfilled,  
but verily it will be yours.

When you see the ecstasy of love  
 of the wives of the cowherds,  
 you will immediately realize  
 the truth of what I now tell you.

(130)

May this composition  
 bring unfettered joy to the heart of the master  
 whose lotus feet are the shelter of Rūpa,  
 whose mind is always overjoyed,  
 absorbed in the pastimes  
     of the cowherd settlement;  
 due to his attachment, free from artifice,  
 he dances madly in the circle of Mathurā,  
     which has been this poem's theme.

(131)

May Śrī Kṛṣṇa,  
 the merciful youth  
 who played at boyish games  
 with Śrīdāman and his other childhood friends,  
 who performed the *rāsa* dance  
 with the young cowherd maidens,  
 who effortlessly killed so many wicked demons,  
     carry you across the material ocean.



## *Hamsadūta*

*The summer sky over Vṛndāvana was cloudless. In that clear, spotless blue firmament, shimmering with the heat of a merciless sun, only one living being could be seen. Like the white clouds of autumn flew a single swan. Spreading his vast wings, he floated in the sky like a ship on the ocean.*

IT WAS JYESTHA, the hottest month of the year. Already desolated by the heat of the sun, Vṛndāvana was further ravaged due to the absence of Kṛṣṇa. That black cloud had left the Vṛndāvana skies long before and was now pouring down his nectar on the princesses of the Mathurā court. So it was that Mathurā was lush and green.

Therefore, I believe, my dear swan, that you find Vraja rather dry these days and are travelling to Mathurā which has been favored by the gods. So thought Lalitā before turning her attention back to singing Kṛṣṇa's glories. Weakened by her sufferings in separation, Rādhā was slowly walking with Viśākhā, Citrā, Indulekhā, and the other sakhīs. Their intention was to sit by the banks of the Yamunā in the hope that the sun's force would diminish as the afternoon progressed and that the waterside breezes would have a cooling effect. The fatigue induced by the heat could be eliminated by bathing in the refreshing current of the river. The gopīs would sing Kṛṣṇa's qualities and breathe life back into Rādhā.

There are ten stages in separation. Only the last, death, remained for Rādhā to experience. Illness, bewilderment, madness—all the other stages had been passed. She had reached the stage of divine madness, *divyonmāda*. Indeed, she should have died long ago. Can any human being suffer so intensely and survive? But a single thread of hope tied the doe of Rādhā's life to her body as it burned in the fire of separation and allowed it not to flee. This hope only caused her suffering to increase.

Following behind Lalitā Sakhī was a young gopī who was always closeby. Although younger than the others, she seemed to understand Lalitā and Rādhā's every movement, every sign, every

unspoken desire. She observed Lalitā's eyes turn toward the swan. In her heart, softened by deep emotions, she had an idea which would perhaps bring happiness to her mistress Rādhā and to her mistress's dearest friend, Lalitā.

Silently, she prayed to the swan as though crying out at the top of her voice: O swan, lord of the skies! Please come down to earth, just for a moment. Come today and listen to our lady's distress. If all the sadness and distress of the world were two great mountains, they could be thrown into the ocean of Rādhā's happiness and distress and be completely lost. They would fall to the bottom somewhere and never be seen again. This is what is meant by nectar and poison being mixed together and becoming one. O swan! You are knowledgeable about love. Come today and taste the flavors of this love that Rādhā experiences.

Lalitā will address you and reveal her mistress's innermost feelings. She will describe Kṛṣṇa's form and rejuvenate Rādhā. She will speak of Rādhā's most intimate secrets and happiness. By revealing this, she will rid Rādhā of her pain. Through Lalitā's words, Kṛṣṇa will appear to Rādhā and she will feel ecstasy.

O clever swan! Messenger! You will say nothing. It won't be necessary. Whether you eventually go to Kṛṣṇa or not is not important to us. Kṛṣṇa will get this message anyway if the cord of love still binds these two hearts together. Come, my dear swan, today we will initiate you into Rādhā's love for Kṛṣṇa.

In order to fulfill Rūpa Mañjārī's desire for Rādhā's pleasure, by Yogamāyā's unobserved influence, the swan slowly descended to the thick growth of lotus flowers in the Yamunā and acquiesced to her desire with a mellow honking sound.

(1)

Let my heart become the abode  
of that eternally delightful person  
who is attired in garments  
    more lustrously yellow than orpiment,  
the bottom of whose lotus feet  
    is a bouquet of crimson hibiscus,  
whose body is blackish like the tamāla tree,  
who has a playful smile drawn on his face,  
    the source of supreme joy.

(2)

From the day that Mukunda,  
the Cupid of the gopis' hearts,  
left the house of Nanda,  
led by the son of Gandinī to the city of Mathurā,  
Rādhā, in her separation,  
has been swept into the dizzying whirlpools  
    of a fathomless river  
    of tormenting waters.

(3)

Once upon a time,  
accompanied by her friends,  
Rādhā, feverish in mind,  
arrived at the shores of the Yamunā  
to extinguish the fire of distress  
which consumed her innards.  
Upon seeing the cottage, long unseen,



which had been the site of so many a tryst,  
a dear companion, named unconsciousness,  
came to protect her  
from the agony of remembrance.

(4)

Placing her motionless body  
on a bed of soft lotus stems on the sand,  
Rādhā's sakhīs surrounded her  
and with lotus leaves began to fan her.  
Fearing the imminence of some great adversity,  
they began to cry so intensely  
that the waves of the Daughter of the Sun  
broke higher and higher with their tears.

(5)

Lalitā then held the silent Rādhā against her breast  
and sprinkled her with Yamunā water  
from the lotus leaf with which she was fanning.  
Rādhā's throat quivered  
with the faintest signs of breathing,  
at which sight, the relieved sakhīs  
rejoiced loudly.

(6)

Lalitā again lay Rādhā down on the lotus bed  
and rose to bring her water from the stream.  
But stepping forward on the bank,  
she saw, making a sweet sound

while moving toward her most gracefully,  
a dazzling white swan.

(7)

At the sight of the charming bird,  
Lalitā's hopes began to fly;  
she reverently welcomed it with a bow.  
Stepping lightly forward until she was by its side,  
she was seized by the conviction  
that this swan was the messenger  
they had been seeking  
to carry their words to Kṛṣṇa's home.

(8)

Indignant, Lalitā was suddenly overcome  
with loving spite toward the killer of Kāmsa,  
and she began to explain her heartfelt wishes to the swan.  
One should not think that there is any fault  
in her appealing to a dumb animal like this,  
for the nature of Kṛṣṇa prema is  
that it makes the soul innocent,  
and seeing Kṛṣṇa everywhere,  
the devotee trusts everyone.

(9)

You reside in the pure waters  
of the holy sites of pilgrimage;  
you take pleasure (not in illusion,  
but) in feeding upon lotus stems;

you are thus recognizable as a great soul.

So I, distressed and weak, a woman,

seek your shelter,

for an appeal to a noble person

is never wasted.

(10)

The enemy of Madhu is famous for his romantic arts,

but he has thrown us into oblivion so long ago

and gone to live happily in the city of Mathurā,

while we remain here, out of our minds

with the scorching of separation's fires.

Go quickly, then, deliver this message

and make him hear it in its entirety.

(11)

I bless you that you encounter no obstacles

and that auspiciousness accompany you.

Kindly have compassion and don't delay a moment:

be joyful and rise up on your way.

Let the children of the cowherd men

run below you, lifting their excited, curious eyes

to watch as you fly overhead.

(12)

O foremost amongst the fortunate!

He who is the ocean of the romantic arts,

the master of the lives of the cowherd maidens,

was led speedily down this path

by the lord of charity, the merciless Akrūra.  
That is the path that you must follow,  
now famed throughout the entire world,  
to reach the city of the Daśārha.

(13)

O lover of the female swans!  
You will know the way,  
which was marked with the wheel of the chariot  
and exulted at the touch of his lotus feet,  
when you see the cowherd beauties,  
whose white cheeks are drenched  
with tears gushing from their doe eyes.  
Even now they suffer from the intensity  
of their desire to be reunited with their lover.

(14)

O friend, please drink  
the fragrant waters of the Yamunā,  
blue as the ripe jambu fruit,  
and satisfy yourself with some tender lotus stems,  
as soft and cooling as camphor.  
Rest a while in the thick dark branches of this tree  
before happily starting off  
for the city of the Vṛṣṇis.

(15)

O feathered friend!  
When their lover set off,

standing by Akrūra's side on the chariot,  
the gopīs followed to a great distance,  
helplessly grieving aloud.

Start by following the path they took on that day  
and I guarantee you the inevitable attainment  
of the highest perfection of spiritual life—  
you truly shall become worthy  
of the name *parama haṁsa*.

(16)

Dear swan! One day Kṛṣṇa suddenly  
stole our garments while we bathed in the Yamunā  
and climbed up a kadamba tree  
in order to make us reveal  
our theretofore secret love for him.  
That tree, the thick foliage of whose branches  
prevents the sun's scorching rays from penetrating,  
will be your shelter when you are fatigued by your travel.

(17)

It was at the foot of this very tree  
that Kṛṣṇa radiated the loveliness of his form  
in all the ten directions,  
wearing his peacock feather headdress  
and a most precious silk cloth which glowed like gold.  
His body was glossy black like the tamāl tree  
as he played sweetly on the simple flute  
which kissed his lips,  
expanding waves of supreme joy.

(18)

That site of Hari's *rāsa-līlā* is decorated  
 by the black musk which splattered from the bodies  
 of the cowherd maidens as they danced,  
 bursting with zeal for these games with their Lord.  
 Still effulgent with the *mālātī* vines  
 that had been trampled in the course of the circle dance,  
 it will bring total euphoria to your mind.

(19)

Not far from there, woven with *mādhavī* creepers,  
 stands the passion pavilion of the hero of the gods.  
 I forewarn you: Do not cast your eyes upon it  
 lest your heart erupt in celestial joy  
 and you, forgetting your mission,  
 remain rooted to the spot.  
 Should that happen, we *gopīs*  
     would surely die.

(20)

On second thought, do take a look!  
 It may be against our interest,  
 but even if it means a delay, do look  
 at everything in Hari's playground.  
 Without so doing, your purity is all in vain:  
 for what is of any value  
 if it does not lead to consciousness  
     of the enemy of *Cāṇūra*?

(21)

Govardhana, the friend of the cows, is witness  
 to the intimate love-games of the gopīs,  
 who would rush to meet Kṛṣṇa  
 after hearing just once  
 the irresistible sounds of his melodious flute.  
 Govardhana's beauty is increased  
 by the vine-covered bowers scattered over its slopes  
 and by the stones which the killer of Madhu  
     turned into cots to lie upon.  
 Feast your eyes on it, for a single glance  
 will arouse great delight in you.

(22)

Govardhana became a knower of *rasa*  
 as a result of the touch of Kṛṣṇa's  
     discus-stamped hand.  
 We believe that he is the greatest  
 of all the mountains on earth,  
 for did he not defeat Indra,  
     the enemy of his own kind,  
 and thus earn the epithet 'increaser of the cows'  
 by which he is universally known?

(23)

At the foot of Govardhana is a tamāl tree,  
 upon seeing which the tribal women  
 have become agitated;

their bodies have become hot  
with the constant remembrance of Govinda.  
When you fly past them,  
kindly soothe them with the wind stirred by your wings  
and moistened by the Yamunā's waters,  
even if the relief is only momentary.

(24)

As you reach the limits of Govardhana,  
you will see another grove of kadamba trees  
still shivering with the delight  
of having been the site of the toll station,  
where Rādhā's lover displayed his expertise  
in stimulating the love of the gopīs.  
If you rest under those kadamba trees  
for even a moment, you will experience rapturous bliss.  
If not, your reputation as  
an enjoyer of rasas will all be in vain.

(25)

On the outskirts of Vṛndāvana  
you will see the dried skull of the Ariṣṭa demon,  
as white as the clouds of the autumn season.  
These decaying bones are often mistaken  
for the mountains of Kailāsa  
by the servants of Kuvera,  
who try to ascend its peaks.



(26)

I humbly request you to proceed,  
honking sonorously, to Mathurā—  
the condition of the gopīs has become acute  
due to separation from their Lord;  
that sound will pass  
for the jingling of Hari's anklebells,  
which when heard by the gopīs  
will bring back the life air  
which has now all but deserted their bodies.

(27)

I request you to dwell for even a moment  
on the deep blue-colored branches  
of the Bhāṇḍīra tree,  
which looks so brilliantly beautiful  
in the bright sunshine.  
While you sit there, inundated by the sun's rays,  
it will appear as though Nārāyaṇa  
has appeared, holding the conch and discus,  
and is about to cover the sky  
in his form as Trivikrama.

(28)

O most clever one!  
You must leave the place where the grasses were sprinkled  
with the pure tears of love

which flowed from Brahmā's eight eyes  
as he sang Kṛṣṇa's praises;  
seeing you leave, the forest sylphs will assume  
that Brahmā himself has entered the forest  
on his mount, a relative of yours.

(29–30)

On the day of Kṛṣṇa's fight  
with the serpent Kāliya,  
the gopīs rushed anxiously toward the Yamunā  
to see what was going on,  
but the path became so slippery  
from the tears which spurted in streams from their eyes  
that they stumbled and fell  
and were unable to proceed steadily;  
thus delayed, their anxiety so much increased  
that their state of mind  
became quite indescribable.

But on arriving, they found Murāri  
simply showing off by madly dancing  
on the heads of that monstrous serpent,  
causing the ruby-red jewels from the snake's foreheads  
to fall into the Yamunā's bluish waters,  
producing a beautiful violet effect.  
You must taste the holy waters of Kāliya's lake,  
scented by the fragrant pollen of the kadamba trees  
which stand on its banks.

(31)

In a spot near Kālīya lake, you will  
 come across the goddess Vṛndā Devī  
 who lives there in the shape of the tulasī plant.  
 Her body is wilting due to the fire of separation from Kṛṣṇa;  
 her lamentation increases when she sees  
 the new flower buds appearing on her branches  
 for she knows that Kṛṣṇa is not here to enjoy them.  
 She alone can truly appreciate the anguish of the gopīs  
 and therefore you must honor her  
 with all humility and reverence.

(32)

Thus having traversed the eleven groves  
 where the peacocks' melodies echo,  
 you shall arrive at Madhuvana, the twelfth,  
 which is densely shaded by mango trees.  
 There stands the glorious capital  
 of the Yadu dynasty, whose fame purifies the earth.

(33)

There in that city, you will find  
 innumerable towering, grand mansions,  
 adorned pleasingly with colorful stone pillars,  
 looking like Kailāsa's little children.  
 My friend, you will derive great delight  
 when you see this pleasing abode of the Yadus,  
 its gardens resplendent with flowering trees,  
 beautifying the banks of the sweet-watered Yamunā.

(34)

In one place in that city of Mathurā,  
Nandiśvara, the bull on whom Lord Śiva mounts,  
    grazes on tender grasses;  
somewhere else, Lord Brahmā's swan carrier  
    eats the stems of lotus flowers;  
elsewhere you will find  
the peacock mount of Kārttikeya  
    grappling venomous serpents;  
and in yet another place,  
you will be able to see Airāvata,  
the elephant carrier of Lord Indra,  
    happily munching the leaves of a frankincense tree.

(35)

"O dear one! Can't you feel  
that your apparel has loosened?  
Aren't you aware that the jewels from your necklace  
are sliding off one by one and falling on the street?  
The litany of Govinda's glorious acts  
has so inebriated you that even the town harlots  
will mock your hard-earned reputation for chastity."

(36)

"O foolish one! There is no more need  
for dressing up now, so stop it!  
I know that my right foot  
has not been painted with vermilion,  
even so, I must go right away.

I can hear the loud hubbub  
 of the crowds of women in the street  
 swarming outside to admire  
 the incarnate Cupid of Vṛndāvana  
 as he passes by."

(37)

"When the destroyer of Kāṁsa rides his chariot,  
 adorned with lustrous aśoka flowers,  
 the avenues of the town are flooded  
 with ecstasy by his glances.  
 O dearest friend! Why are you pushing us aside  
 to occupy the entire window alone,  
 gazing with fixed eyes?  
 Won't you allow us too to have a glance  
 at that which you see?"

(38)

"Dear friend, what are your eager eyes  
 searching for in the void?  
 What are you absorbed in, sitting here alone?  
 You don't heed the hundreds of appeals  
 spoken to you by your friends.  
 O lotus-eyed one, from your gestures  
 we surmise that the youthful Śyāmasundara,  
 who is the color of a beautiful black cloud,  
 has crossed the field of your vision."

(39)

"Dear friend! Don't allow the helpless tears  
to roll down your cheeks any more—  
Kṛṣṇa will shortly come  
to accept your affectionate glances."  
This is the way the ladies of Mathurā  
spoke to one another on the day  
that Kṛṣṇa first came into town.

(40)

O dear swan!

Before you are the women of the city,  
whose minds have been kissed  
by the waves of joy and love  
which were awakened by directly contemplating  
Damodara's moonlike face.  
Though they have placed a burden  
of endless calamity squarely on the heads  
of the cowherd maidens of Vraja,  
their vision is sure to bring joy  
to your eyes.

(41)

O dear swan!

Progressively passing  
by the palaces of the Vṛṣṇis,  
densely crowded together  
on the narrow passages of the town,  
their glamour increased

by countless banners atop them  
 fluttering in the wind and decorating the sky,  
 you will find your way  
 to Kṛṣṇa's quarters.

(42)

Along the turrets of that splendid edifice  
 are numerous crystal swans,  
 whose beaks and feet are beset with gems.  
 When Brahmā comes to town,  
 his swan carrier takes them to be his brothers  
 and greets them respectfully  
 and places himself at their service.

(43–44)

"When will I see him again?  
 The gopīs could not find him,  
 though they searched continuously  
 on the forested banks of the Yamunā,  
 where he surely went to hide.  
 O friend, when will he, the killer of the Mura demon,  
 who upon seeing me would break into a smile  
 that would sway the whole universe with joy,  
 appear before me again?"

"O Rādhē! Shake off this mood of depression!  
 Kṛṣṇa promised that he would be coming back—  
 he would never lie to us:  
 It won't be long before your friend

will be reunited with you,  
sporting a new peacock feather in his hair."

Thus the mynah couple placed by the gopīs  
in Uddhava's care as a gift for Kṛṣṇa  
can be heard in the streets of Mathurā,  
plaintively repeating  
a conversation from Vṛndāvana.

(45)

Atop Hari's palace you will see  
the whirling vinelike clouds of incense smoke,  
so dark and blue that the foolish peacocks mistake them  
for rainclouds and greet them heartily.  
O prudent one! If by this sight  
you become fearful of the rainy season  
and wish to fly off to Mānasarovara  
(as do all your brethren at that time),  
then I will be able to understand  
that you have been ruined  
by your affection for the company  
of the dull-witted.

(46)

Proceed thence to Kṛṣṇa's private chambers,  
garlanded by nine windows,  
its white crystal pillars bedecked  
with swaying locks of pearls;  
around the base of the walls  
of this abode of pleasure,



the descriptions from the Tenth Canto  
of the conqueror of Mura's own pastimes  
have been engraved in gold.

(47)

At one end of the veranda  
leading to his private quarters  
is a perch made of emeralds  
where peacocks sleep away the night,  
making indistinct, intoxicated sounds.  
Free from anxiety, and thus resting peacefully,  
wait there for a suitable opportunity  
to speak to the Lord of the Yadus.

(48–49)

There you will observe Hari,  
relaxing as he leans slightly to his left,  
on a bed whose sublime  
and sparkling white cotton sheets  
give it the appearance  
of a snow-covered mountain peak  
containing all the beauty of the three worlds.

Both of his elbows rest  
on the full-moon-like pillows before him.  
His blackish bodily hue is as pleasing  
as the black waters of the Kalindi,  
charming jewelled earrings  
in the shape of dolphins grace his cheeks,

meeting his sidelong glances,  
 and the splendour of his silken dress  
 eclipses the luster of gold—  
 all this beauty of Mukunda  
 will flood your eyes  
 like an ecstatically maddening ambrosia.

(50)

Vikadru, the eldest member  
 of the entire Yadu clan  
 will be sitting near him, singing sweetly  
 many amusing tales from the Purāṇas.  
 Leaning on a jewel-studded pillar,  
 you will see the hard-hearted Akrūra,  
 the very utterance of whose name  
 sends a shiver of fear through the gopīs' breasts,  
 recounting the history of the Kurus.

(51)

Sātyaki, the most glorious  
 of the Śini clan of Yadu fighters,  
 as well as the renowned Kṛtavarman,  
 will be fanning him gracefully from each side  
 with royal yak-tail whisks.  
 Bṛhaspati's disciple Uddhava  
 will surely be seen massaging  
 Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet as he kneels  
 on the golden floor before him.

(52)

The king of birds, Garuḍa, will be standing  
with folded hands and a heart brimming  
with love and veneration,  
as he awaits the order for a quick departure.  
When that great bird flies off on a mission,  
upon hearing the sound of his flapping wings,  
the students of the town abandon their arguments  
about the melodies of the Sāmaveda.

(53)

When one as clever as Brahmā  
finds himself unable to properly depict  
the magnificence and beauty of even  
a single toenail of Dāmodara's foot,  
then how could an ordinary woman like myself  
ever hope to do so?

It is only because I am a woman  
and possess the simple candour  
which is the genius of my sex,  
that I venture to do it.

(54)

Lord Brahmā himself fell before  
the tips of Hari's toes,  
covering them with the upper part of his crowns,  
when he was plagued with guilt  
over the act of purloining

the children and calves of Vraja.  
The sage of the gods,  
upon beholding them,  
is helpless with the supreme joy  
that manifests itself in him,  
and he laments sincerely  
for the poor souls who, though liberated,  
have been deprived of this great ecstasy.

(55)

Envious, the lotus flowers desire  
the rosy hue of Kṛṣṇa's feet  
and so have taken the vow  
of performing austerities in the water.  
I quietly praise the winter season,  
which each year comes to punish them  
for their improper addiction to such practices  
by causing them to wilt  
until, finally, they lose their lives.

(56)

The splendid luster of Hari's legs  
outshines the emerald-colored banana trees,  
destroying their pride in their own beauty;  
they have taken on the character  
of stout pillars to which are bound  
the elephants of the gopīs' minds,  
powerful and fierce in their intoxication.

(57)

O friend!

The deep and wide lake  
which fills Madhūsudana's navel  
is the prime source of life  
for the gopīs' minnowlike eyes.

At the beginning of the universal creation,  
a lotus grew in that lake,  
in whose stem the worlds have their abode  
and in whose whorl

Brahmā also took his birth.

(58)

O friend! His belly,

beautified by three narrow, vinelike lines  
has mastered the art of slipping through

a multitude of ropes;

there within, Yasodā, looking through his mouth,  
twice observed the entire universe

peopled by men, gods, and serpents.

(59)

When the slender beauties of the creation  
gaze upon his chest,  
garlanded with forest flowers,  
desire immediately saturates their minds.  
The kaustubha jewel, unique in the world,  
though possessed of a radiance

equal to that of millions of suns,  
upon his brilliant chest  
appears to be no brighter than a firefly.

(60)

Glory to his arms, more brilliant than two  
sapphire pillars set with precious gems,  
which remove the darkness of the whole world;  
the marks left by Keśi's teeth  
still make a decorative band around his bicep.  
With these arms, which diffuse the perfume of musk,  
he would forcefully embrace  
the necks of the gopīs,  
languid from love's intoxication.

(61)

His countenance, sweet from happy absorption  
in thoughts of love,  
has taken possession of the empire  
of waves of youthful loveliness  
cascading throughout the universe;  
his eyebrows dance  
like a vine in the breeze,  
his sweet smile is the abode  
of ever-new ambrosial mellows,  
and his lips reveal a wreath  
of glittering pearl-like teeth.

(62)

O minstrel of the skies!  
 What is the use of all these descriptions?  
 Listen to me, my friend, as I tell you clearly  
 the essence of how to recognize him:  
 he whose slightest vision  
 instantaneously inundates your heart  
 with supreme delight  
 is none other than our Kṛṣṇa,  
 the defeater of Madhu.

(63)

Look carefully, O dear swan!  
 You yourself are well acquainted  
 with the intrigues of the heart  
 with your sweet-singing lady-swan friends;  
 you may find Kṛṣṇa similarly absorbed  
 in such affairs with the city women.  
 If so, do not narrate our sufferings to him,  
 for we are mere village girls—  
 the mind which is saturated with nectar  
 does not go looking for whey.

(64)

If, on the other hand,  
 the cuckoos have encircled him,  
 their plaintive refrain flooding him

with pleasurable memories of Vṛndāvana;  
or if the breezes blow gently,  
carrying the fragrance of Govardhana jasmine,  
then only should you submit to him,  
the enemy of Mura,  
the following words:

(65)

O lover of the gopīs! Lalitā,  
who is the dearest friend of that gopī  
whom you raised above all others  
while residing here in Vṛndāvana,  
pays her respectful obeisances,  
O charming one,  
at the golden stool  
upon which rest your lotus feet  
and sends this message  
to you who are firm and brave,  
yet reckless and playful.

(66)

O destroyer of Mura,  
the ruddy brown calf you so carefully reared  
by feeding her fresh leaves and lotus stems  
has now given birth to her first calf,  
and the weight of her udder is so great  
that the teats reach down to her knees.



(67)

Do you remember that mādhaṇī sapling  
you took from the kadamba grove  
and replanted by the mango tree,  
as if to make it the mango's lifelong,  
wifelike companion?

She was only little then, a foot long  
with two or three twigs on her at most—  
now she has grown so big.

Yet in your absence, she constantly  
cries tears of sap which gush down her side;  
seeing her deplorable condition,  
we are also moved to the brink of tears.

(68)

There once was a child  
who took birth in the womb of Yaśodā  
and who was to become the abode  
of greatest happiness for  
the cowherds of Vṛndāvana.

Another child was born  
in the stonelike womb of Gāndinī  
who was to...Śiva! Śiva!...  
put an end to the glory  
of the land of Gokula.

(69)

O Murāri! The demons you killed  
 seem to have returned one by one:  
 Ariṣṭāsura seems to have shaken  
 the beautiful-eyed gopī girls  
 and thrown them to the brink of calamity;  
 Tṛṇāvarta has returned as the grasses  
 covering the unused playgrounds of the Lord,  
 and Vyomāsura has returned by making  
 the whole area of Vraja seem  
 as empty as outer space.

(70)

O Hari, under no circumstance  
 should you come to Vṛndāvana nowadays;  
 its creepers have become so dreadfully poisonous  
 that the whole land is a danger zone.  
 Were it not so, O destroyer of the demon Madhu,  
 why would the brown-eyed gopīs fall unconscious  
 just by breathing the perfume  
 of their flowers?

(71)

O Hari!  
 We are but cowherd girls, ordinary country women,  
 and you should not waste your time with us  
 when the princesses of Mathurā are at your service.  
 Gone is that time when,  
 anxious for our company,

you would wait in the darkness of night  
on the path through the woods  
near our homes.

(72)

O Lord! We do not blame you  
for having forsaken us,  
because persons possessing a dark complexion  
can rarely give up their deceitfulness.  
Just consider the case of the cuckoo who,  
though reared by the crow from the time of incubation,  
flies away as soon as his wings have grown,  
forgetting his benefactor forever.

(73)

O undisputed Lord of Vṛndāvana!  
I have finished my prologue,  
which is anyway well known to you;  
now prepare to listen to the drama  
in the mood of separation  
which is being enacted here.  
But first, I must ask you one question:  
Do you ever remember those two  
unfortunate syllables: *Rā - dhā*?

(74)

O Kṛṣṇa! You who were so attached  
to your 'household affairs'  
in the caves of Govardhana

and the forest groves!  
 What anguish it is for me  
 that everyone is whispering about  
 the misfortune of the gopīs,  
 for she who amongst them  
 was formerly supreme in your estimations  
 has now been reduced to nothing more  
 than any other commonplace woman.

(75)

O foremost of the Yadu clan!  
 If you remain forgetful of Vṛndāvana,  
 and if the lord of death  
 does not favor her soon,  
 then how will she be able to pass her days,  
 seeing the picturesque landscape  
 which was formerly her abode of joy  
 but is now simply a source  
 of endless torture in your absence?

(76)

Nor will Yamarāja, the lord of death,  
 favor Rādhā, O Murāri!  
 Since her tears have formed a river  
 whose waves are even more forceful  
 than those of the Yamunā,  
 which looks wan in comparison,  
 the lord of death, Yamunā's older brother,

has become envious and does not oblige Rādhā,  
even when she cries out to him for mercy.

(77)

Our dearest friend Rādhā  
saw your inexplicably attractive form  
from a distance only once  
and immediately she lost all sense  
of what is beneficial or harmful for her.  
Like a moth entering joyfully into a flame,  
she offered herself helplessly  
to a blazing fire of love for you.

(78)

O Kṛṣṇa!

I am forced to admit to you,  
who are to the residents of Vṛndāvana  
what the moonlight is to the water lilies,  
that Rādhā is a victim of her own foolishness,  
for even now she lacks the wisdom  
to remove from her heart, even slightly,  
the memory of that person  
who is responsible for her  
burning in the fire of distress.

(79)

The hunchbacked Kubjā  
now freely enjoys the pleasure

of carefree residence in your heart,  
so who can be more fortunate than she?  
My simple friend Rādhā has somehow  
become bereft of her pious merit,  
for no longer can she find a place there,  
for even a brief moment.

(80)

O destroyer of the Mura demon!  
When Śrīmatī loses consciousness  
and lies motionless at the whistling sound  
of the bamboos in the wind  
remembering the sound of your flute,  
her elders become puzzled  
and search for the cause of her malady:  
some fear that she has been possessed by spirits,  
some apprehend that she was bitten  
by some cruel serpent not knowing that, yes,  
she had been bitten by the snake Akrūra,  
others ascribe the cause to epilepsy,  
but no one actually knows.

(81)

Lately, ominous new waves of fear  
are dancing constantly  
in the inner chambers of her mind.  
O most beautiful one,  
your form is like honey  
for the starving eyes of the world.

Now that you live in Mathurā,  
Rādhā never gets any more news of you  
and she has become most anxious.

(82)

Sometimes she offers her respects  
to those sages of unfailing words,  
seeking advice on how she can get you back;  
sometimes she tries to please the mystics  
who know various spells,  
thinking that surely there must be some mantra  
that she can chant which will force you to return;  
sometimes she humbly renders service to those  
who know the art of using potions;  
and sometimes she prays devotedly to Pārvatī Devī  
for the benediction of seeing you again.  
O Kṛṣṇa, upset by your absence,  
that poor girl sees nothing of merit  
anywhere in this world.

(83)

O enemy of Kāṁsa!  
These days, my dearest friend  
spends all her time at Nandīśvara,  
worshipping you as she remembers you:  
as the protector of the animals of Vraja,  
as one sporting a fresh peacock feather in his headdress,  
as one engaged in such whimsical sports  
that cause the lust of all women to increase,

as one whose form is more beautiful  
 than a new rain cloud  
 and as one who is always enjoying new loving affairs.  
 All she wants is to be able to have you by her side again  
 and that is all she prays for,  
 whether to you, Śiva, or any other god.

(84)

In her suffering, she draws  
 with the sap of a freshly broken tamāla twig  
 a captivating image of you on the ground,  
 the eyebrows in the shape  
 of Cupid's destructive bow.  
 Then, wishing to wrap  
 her vinelike arms around your neck,  
 she throws herself to the ground,  
 where she lies, unconscious and motionless.

(85)

O Kṛṣṇa! Thinking of you has completely  
 stunned the senses of my foolish friend,  
 and often she even thinks  
 that she has become you!  
 Even so, O enemy of Mura,  
 the fire of separation does not stop  
 burning Rādhā's mind—  
 this intolerable suffering  
 does not let up for even a moment.



(86)

Although you have so cruelly thrown Rādhā  
onto a mass of sufferings,  
she still constantly thinks of you  
and your activities, even now.

That most perfect of chaste women  
thinks that due to separation from her  
your heart must be broken—  
though we know that it is as hard as a thunderbolt—  
and thus her own heart breaks day by day.

(87)

O destroyer of Kāṁsa!  
She has become absorbed in deep yogic trance,  
because she has heard that you always  
reveal yourself to such meditators;  
she is preparing herself for the hardest of austerities  
because she has heard that in this way  
people are favored  
by your appearance before them.

(88)

She causes all her associates to become despondent  
because she remains constantly bathed in tears  
as she calls out your names and qualities:  
"O Murāri! Your bodily hue is no different  
from that of a blue lotus blooming  
in the black waters of the Yamunā,

O Mukunda! You are Vṛndāvana's Cupid,  
 the jewel amongst the gods;  
 O joy of Vraja, O delight of Nandīśvara,  
 O beloved son of Nanda, Hari!"

(89)

Suffering from the heat  
 of the flickering flames  
 of the blazing conflagration  
 of separation from you,  
 and moreover disturbed by the  
 numerous wounds inflicted by Cupid's arrows,  
 I am afraid that the doe of my friend's life  
 will soon be forced to abandon  
 the thinning forest of her body—  
     if not today, then tomorrow.

(90)

My friend has now surrendered herself fully  
 to Śiva, whose body is the white color  
 of the foam on the ocean of milk  
 and who is crowned by the moon.  
 Since he is the subduer of Cupid,  
 it is beyond the power of eros  
     to do her any harm.  
 Only you, Hari, for some reason,  
 continue to torment her—  
 is it for your own amusement that you do this?

(91)

O jewel of the Yadu dynasty!

I understand the feelings

of the cowherd maidens,

but I don't know what magic

causes us to go on loving you

despite your cruelty.

The madman Uddhava has tried

to mitigate our sufferings

with many metaphysical instructions;

but frankly, such utterances

only double her anguish.

(92)

That Uddhava, the disciple of Bṛhaspati,

is the Yādava's advocate in your court.

Kālindī, who has always been our friend,

is the sister of the god of death.

These two are therefore no longer actively

pursuing our interests.

O chief of the Yadus, who else is there

known to me in your court

who will be able to properly narrate

Rādhā's sorrows and win you over?

(93)

Her body is wilting

from the convulsions caused

by her internal wounds;  
 and though covered with budding hopes,  
 she is constantly under  
 the calamitous influence of an eclipse;  
 she finds no joy in anything,  
 her girlfriends no longer  
 amuse themselves in her company,  
 just as bees no longer enjoy a wilting flower.  
 O Kṛṣṇa, you are like the moon,  
 when will you come and revive Rādhā  
 with the touch of your feet,  
 just as the moon revives the lily  
 with the touch of its rays?

(94)

O hero! For so long my sakhi  
 has hoped against hope for reunion with you,  
 and only for that reason did she make any effort  
 to protect her life against innumerable threats.  
 Now, however, the faintest hope  
 for such reunion has deserted her  
 as the expected date of your return  
 has long since passed.  
 Giving up any hope for continuing her life,  
 she is calmly gazing at the mango bud.

(95)

Rādhikā's end is near;  
 her friends have long given up efforts

to save her, for they can see  
 that Cupid has causelessly chosen  
 to make her his enemy and torment her;  
 it is impossible to do anything at all to help her.  
 Only one companion still refuses to abandon  
 the lotus-eyed Rādhā,  
 and continues to try to keep her alive—  
     the hope of your return.

(96)

O Kṛṣṇa! Expert enjoyer of the *rāsa* dance!  
 If you have truly forsaken that Rādhā  
 with whom you once created a love  
 that deepened in intensity at every moment,  
 then may a curse fall on this swab of cotton  
 which we hold before her nostrils  
 and which indicates that there is still  
 a slight bit of life left within her.

(97)

O Mukunda! Who on this earth can narrate  
 the hundreds of things that Rādhārāṇī  
 prattles in her delirious state,  
 her confused eyes darting?  
 O Lord! In my sorrow,  
 let me repeat some of these utterances:  
 Please allow them to enter  
 your beautifully formed ears,  
 decorated by dolphin-shaped earrings.

(98)

Rādhā says:

"O Lalitā! When Kṛṣṇa was in Vraja,  
his ever-increasing love for me  
made me easily consider my religious duties to my husband  
as something exceedingly insignificant.  
How painful it is that he no longer loves me.  
I am embarrassed that I still maintain life  
in a body which has now become  
an unbearable burden.

(99)

"I do not know which words  
can be used most effectively  
in a message to him.  
If I say, 'I love you more than my very self,'  
he will consider it pretentious.  
If I say, 'I cannot live without you,'  
it speaks of my selfishness  
and tarnishes the glory of love,  
And if I say, 'why do you not come back to Vraja?'  
It will show that I am always thinking of him.

(100)

"O sakhī! Long ago, when Kṛṣṇa loved me,  
then these forest groves gave me such pure joy;  
how unlimited was the pleasure  
these trees then brought me!  
Now that he has become indifferent,

all of this is simply a source of suffering.  
 When her lord ignores her,  
 what woman would not look upon  
 the whole creation with distaste?

(101)

"O dear Lalitā!  
 Will Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of Madhu,  
 ever again forcibly call me away  
 from the assembly of women,  
 their eyes exhilarated by feelings of love  
 aroused by the melodious notes from his flute?  
 Will I ever gaze with a look of maddened love  
 into the eyes of that Lord of mine,  
 whose dancing eyebrows  
 have ruined the religious vows  
 of all the chaste girls of Vraja?

(102)

"O well-wishing friend!  
 Long past is the day when naughty Kṛṣṇa,  
 so greatly eager to enjoy with me,  
 found me in a cave in Govardhana  
 where I was playfully hiding from him.  
 He grabbed hold of me suddenly,  
 pulling me to his chest as I feigned anger.  
 In the end, my breasts were marked  
 with hundreds of half-moon shaped scratches.

(103)

"In the beginning of the sweet autumn season,  
filled with the sounds of buzzing bees  
in mountain forests, whitened by waves  
of silver moonlight,  
will I ever again tightly wrap in these arms  
that disputatious Govinda  
as we spar with each other  
in Cupid's erotic arguments?

(104)

"My mind is burning up!  
What agony! What am I to do?  
I can see no shore on either side  
of this great sea of suffering  
into which I have fallen.  
Here I bow to you with my head lowered,  
please tell me that remedy at once  
by which I will find a minute particle of courage,  
even if it lasts for just a moment.

(105)

"If he has really become  
the foremost of the hard-hearted  
and left me—let it be so, he is free.  
As for me, my only hope  
is to await my inevitable end,  
but who could endure his coming here to Vraja  
in the deception of my dreams  
and forcefully ravishing me against my will?



(106)

"This improper behavior of his  
 is giving great distress to my mind;  
 you should go immediately to Mathurā  
 and tell that cheeky and irresponsible Hari  
 to stop acting in this way.  
 O friend, do it quickly  
 before he comes again and,  
 in a frenzy of passion  
 at the beginning of my dreams,  
 tears off my waistbells.

(107)

"Listen, my dear friend,  
 it's not just in dreams that he comes;  
 please don't disbelieve me,  
 thinking that I have gone mad,  
 but hear what I have experienced directly:  
 how surprised I was when your friend  
 unexpectedly came to the forests  
 by the slopes of Govardhana  
 and started to exhibit his scholarship  
 in erotic debate.

(108)

"Indignant, I ran away from his touch,  
 trying to escape to the deeper woods  
 where it was dark and I would be invisible,  
 but the sound of my anklebells,  
 which only tinkled louder

as I quickened my step in fear of being caught,  
revealed the direction I had taken.  
As he approached me,  
moving playfully closer to touch me,  
so eager was he that his eyes  
gleamed in excitement  
and he never noticed that his flute  
had slipped from his lotus hand  
and fallen to the ground.

(109)

"My dear sakhī!

Being unable to escape him,  
I covered myself with thick vines,  
decorated with smile-like flowers,  
and began to whimper in trepidation;  
that friend of yours started teasing me  
and then tenderly lifted my head  
so that he could kiss me with lips  
that glowed as bright as the bimba fruit.

(110)

"Having hidden his flute in my braid,  
and being afraid of discovery,  
I feigned anger and, frowning,  
began to slowly walk away  
toward the mountain again,  
but as he playfully pulled my hair

to stop me from going,  
 he discovered the stolen flute  
 and began to carry me off  
 to imprison me in the nearest cave  
     for my little deception.

(111)

"Another time, when I was  
 in the grove of mādhavī vines,  
 that impertinent youth crept up behind me  
 and, laughing, covered my eyes with his hands;  
 irritated, I tried to snatch his fingers  
 and push them away, but, O sakhi,  
 as I did so, he suddenly disappeared.  
 I don't know where he goes off to,  
     that king of cheats.

(112)

"O simple one!  
 These are all incidents of the past.  
 Enough of them! Look before you now,  
 your friend is here, his face decorated  
 with a honeylike smile,  
 and like an ocean of erotic love sports,  
 he is throwing a red bandhūka flower at me  
 and making suggestive motions  
 with his pillarlike arms—  
 I think he will come now to embrace me.

(113)

"O friend, don't be shy.  
Get up quickly and tie that miscreant up  
with your thick necklace of pearls  
before he runs off to Mathurā again!"  
Speaking in this way, Rādhā  
suddenly falls senseless to the ground,  
overcome by all these hallucinations,  
born of her ever-expanding love for you.  
You see how, in this way, she is making  
all her friends cry ceaselessly.

(114)

O, what pain it gives me to think  
how wicked-hearted a woman I am:  
since our childhood I always advised  
her, though naturally guileless,  
to play hard to get, to put on a pretence  
of indifference toward you.  
O Lord, teacher of the gopīs  
in the art of love!  
Because of me, she was never fully able  
to enjoy the embraces of your flawless arms.

(115)

When will I be able to serve her  
by fanning her with a clump of fresh branches  
as she lies with her eyes closed,  
her hair perfumed by mādhavī flowers,

experiencing the happiness  
 of undisturbed sleep in your arms  
 on the veranda  
 of your garden-house playground,  
 scented by breezes redolent  
 with the fragrance of Yamunā lotuses.

(116)

Hiding secretly in a nearby grove  
 on the edge of the Vṛndāvana woods,  
 when will I be able to laugh  
 upon seeing her sweet face,  
 joyful after spending an autumn night  
 in loving sports with you,  
 the flower decorations  
 bruised and faded in her hair,  
 her arms wrapped around your shoulders?

(117)

O lover of the gopīs!  
 When will the day come,  
 when, knowing your hiding place,  
 I will send her to it  
 by inventing a pretext, saying:  
 "Sakhī, I am going to pick some flowers  
 over there, some distance away.  
 On the river bank before you,  
 there are so many nice tulasī bushes;  
 why don't you pick their leaves and blossoms?"

(118)

So, my dear swan, after you have thus  
submitted all these messages from Gokula  
to the lotus feet of the enemy of Kamsa,  
you must offer our respects, one by one,  
to his entourage—the ornaments  
that the Lord carries on his own body.  
Even though they are so close to him,  
he has never blessed them  
with the deepest depths  
of his special mercy and love.

(119)

O lover of the she-swans!  
First you should speak to the  
forest-flower garland  
which so attractively adorns his chest.  
After politely inquiring after her health,  
you should repeat to her these words:  
"O most virtuous one!  
Have you forgotten the doe-eyed Rādhā  
who for so long accompanied you  
in cleaving to the breast  
of the enemy of Kamsa?"

(120)

"O garland! Rasika!  
I wonder whether you remember  
the time on the slopes of Govardhana  
when my friend Rādhā,

incensed at the infidelity of the Lord of Gokula,  
 pulled you so strongly  
 that the peacock-feathered crown  
 toppled from his head  
 and his eyes rolled with fear?"

(121)

After this, you should turn  
 to his dolphin-shaped earrings and say,  
 "What is the need of asking  
 after the well-being  
 of such a fortunate entity as yourself?  
 Dangling gaily, you are always kissing  
 Kṛṣṇa's mirrorlike cheeks  
 while being touched by the glances  
 darting from the corners of his eyes.

(122)

"O goddess! Listen to me,  
 I am carefully taking shelter of you  
 with a heart full of love,  
 because I know that you live  
 at the base of his vine-like ears.  
 When the occasion presents itself  
 and there are no other Vṛṣṇis about,  
 please whisper into those ears of his  
 all of these pleas of ours,  
 using the appropriate intonation,  
 convey to him the sufferings of Rādhā."

(123)

O best of the birds!

After giving him a loving embrace,  
speaking with all humility,  
tell the Kaustubha jewel the following:

"O friend, it seems that you too  
have come to a fathomless forgetfulness of Rādhā,  
how can love for the flickering  
bring auspiciousness to anyone?

(124)

"O jewel of the gods!

Because you abide on his chest,  
you know his heart.

I am therefore asking you  
whether we will ever see his wild cavorting  
on the banks of the Yamunā,  
or bear witness to his musical talents  
as he plays the flute to the accompaniment  
of the jingling waist and ankle bells,  
bracelets, and other ornaments  
of the dancing gopīs."

(125)

"O conch shell! You are a newcomer,  
you have never met the gopīs;  
thus you have not the slightest conception  
of the glories of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.  
Even so, we appeal to you,



revealing to you the pain within our hearts,  
 for those who have a generous nature  
 are always affectionate  
 to those who are pained and weary.

(126)

"O offspring of the ocean's heart,  
 O friend! Please come just once  
 for a visit to the region of Vṛndāvana,  
 bringing Govinda with you, of course.  
 You will enjoy residing here—  
 but then again, how will you ever be able  
 to love the land of the cows,  
 where the glories of the flute's fortune  
 are everywhere being constantly sung?"

(127)

Brother! After you have thus spoken to each  
 of these intimate associates of the Lord,  
 supplicating them one by one  
 with words which show  
 the depth of our love,  
 while he, the destroyer of Cāṇūra, listens,  
 then speak to him once again,  
 retelling him the tale  
 of his own ten incarnations,  
 in words which though sweet and loving  
 also reveal our anger.

(128)

"O great fish!

My sakhi baited the hook of her heart  
with the delicacy of love just to catch you,  
casting it into the nectarean waters.

But not only did you swallow up  
both bait and hook,  
but you broke the string of her reason—  
alas, what can the poor girl do now?

(129)

"O Kṛṣṇa! My pitiable friend

was attracted to you when she saw  
your attractive form and your dalliances.  
She was both curious and greatly enlivened,  
but when she approached you,  
you immediately started  
to behave like a tortoise  
hiding your beautiful limbs  
and showing only a hard shell.

Is such behavior proper?

(130)

"O enemy of Kāṁsa!

Once again you have demonstrated  
warthog-like behavior  
by taking to your heart  
Kubjā, a low-class servant girl,  
while she was taking sandalpaste for Kāṁsa.

Thus you made her your wife  
 just as in your boar incarnation  
 you picked up the earth goddess from the mud  
 at the bottom of the universe  
 and made her your wife.

(131)

"Although your pastimes as half-man  
 and half-lion are long since passed,  
 you have not yet abandoned  
 the mood of that incarnation.  
 At that time you showed favor to Prahāda  
 while to others you displayed extreme cruelty,  
     tearing open their hearts.  
 This time also, you have shown preference for Akrūra,  
 while you tear open our hearts  
     by leaving us so feelinglessly.

(132)

"O dwarf incarnation!  
 Just as Bali ignored his guru,  
 so Rādhā has ignored the wishes of her elders,  
 believing in the power of her love  
     and that by it you were hers.  
 In this way she surrendered herself,  
 along with the kingdom of her mind,  
     to you, completely.  
 For this, she got her just reward,  
 for you have shackled her

in the bonds of unfulfilled love  
and thrown her far away from you,  
just as Vāmana bound Bali in chains  
and exiled him to the lower planets.

(133)

"O master, my girlfriend wants to jump  
from a cliff and commit suicide,  
and thus it is logical that you should be hard on her.  
O Bhṛgupati! What is very difficult  
to understand about your activities  
is how you have forgotten even your very own father,  
the Lord of Nandiśvara, to whom you are so dear.

"O master, Rādhā is trying to conquer  
your capital city, so naturally you are cruel to her.  
Still, your activities are hard to understand,  
for you have abandoned even your own guru, Śiva,  
and so were unable to keep the bow he gave you  
and were defeated by Rāmacandra.

(134)

"O Lord of the Raghu dynasty!  
Now that you have left Vraja,  
all the cows are greatly oppressed by different miseries  
like the demon Dūṣaṇa whom you killed;  
similarly, the area surrounding Govardhana  
appears to be drying up,  
taking on the nature of Ravana's brother, Khara;

the land of Vraja will soon be bereft of Rādhā  
 who is dying in separation from you,  
 so it seems that the land is being subjugated  
 by Virādhā, another demon that you killed.  
 It can be seen now that a plague like Marīca  
 is fearfully dancing in the once happy land.  
 How can you remain indifferent when  
 all these demons you once killed  
 are thus cavorting in delight at your absence?"

(135)

"O holder of the plow!  
 You are the enjoyer of many pleasures.  
 The time has come for you  
 to again perform the *rāsa* dance.  
 We have not yet lost Rādhārāṇī  
 who is the main cause of your enjoyment of that dance;  
 somehow or other, she is still maintaining her life.  
 So why don't you come to Vṛndāvana  
 with your bodily luster like the autumn sky  
 filled with fluffy white clouds?"

(136)

"O Buddha, O omniscient one!  
 Rādhā is inimical to the god of lust  
 and opposes everything which interferes  
 with the attainment of her desired goal,  
 as she always remains absorbed  
 in meditation on you.

You are always merciful to all,  
but why are you not sympathetic to her,  
who is attached to nothing but you?

(137)

"O Kalki, come here to your homeland,  
and with the vine-like sword  
of your loving sidelong glances  
surrounded by big black bees  
maddened by their sweetness,  
cut apart the infidel suffering  
born of your separation.  
Come and show your love  
for the cowherd men  
and make the land of Vṛndāvana  
a place with a happy Rādhā again,  
just as Kalki will make the world  
fit for the righteous."

(138)

O Lord of the birds!  
In this way, you should repeat  
these pure messages of love to Kṛṣṇa,  
wetting your face and body  
with the tears pouring from your eyes.  
Then, with your head lowered,  
look at his lotus feet  
and wait attentively for his reply.

(139)

O lord of the swans!  
 Just think how rare a sight  
 is the form of Nanda Mahārāja's son,  
 shouldn't you go to see him, just once?  
 The gopīs are the glory of the world,  
 don't you think you should do  
 this little favor for them?  
 It will only take a few hours  
 to make the trip to Mathurā,  
 so please, O clever one, do not hesitate.

(140)

O enchanter of the female swans!  
 Your mind is absorbed in a desire  
 to appreciate the finer points  
     of romantic dealings,  
 you are the most discerning of persons,  
 for you are able to separate just the milk  
     from a solution of milk and water.  
 Therefore, I ask you: Do you think it is proper  
 to delay in such an important *affaire de coeur*  
 as going to Mathurā to speak to Kṛṣṇa  
     on our behalf?

(141)

All glories to my spiritual master,  
 who is known in the world as Sākara!

Just as the son of Vyāsa  
 was devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa  
 from his very birth,  
 being constantly absorbed in discussion  
     of the *Bhāgavata*,  
     and was thus very dear to the devotees,  
 so too, was he always indifferent  
 to the pleasure of material life,  
     being fully aware of the sweetness of devotion.  
 All glories to him, the foremost  
 of the self-possessed on this earth.

(142)

This poem is glorious because  
 it is about Kṛṣṇa's  
 most confidential and profound *līlās*.  
 The sympathetic audience  
 of persons who are both knowledgeable  
 and sensitive to such transcendental subjects  
 will never see any fault in it,  
 nor in the activities of the Lord himself,  
 who is the only true friend of the world.  
 May it therefore be dedicated to him  
     and may it be the cause  
     of his deep and ever-increasing joy.



# Notes

## Notes to Introduction

Long Sanskrit compound words have been hyphenated throughout for ease of reading.

[1] This verse, attributed to the female poet Śilā Bhaṭṭārikā, has been quoted so many times in all manner of works that it can truly be called an "old saw." It has been included, with some variants in the readings, in compilations such as *Subhāṣita-ratna-kośa* (815), *Sadukti-karṇāmṛta* (533), *Sūkti-muktāli* (87.9), *Śārṅgadharma-paddhati* (3768), etc. The most significant citation, however, is at the beginning of Mammaṭa's textbook on poetics *Kāvya-prakāśa* (example 1.1), where it is used to illustrate the very principle of poetry itself (*vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam*) as primarily being a conveyor of *rasa* or "mood," rather than speech decorated with the various rhetorical flourishes. Of course, this has been contested by later poetics, notably Viśvanātha (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 1.1ff) who finds a mixture of several tropes in this single verse. Its importance for the Gauḍīyas is also attested by its frequent appearance in their works, viz. *Padyāvali* 382, *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* 82.48, *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā* 170, *Goṣāla-campū* 1.33.318 and 2.36.122, and no less than three times in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 2.1.6, 2.13.6, 3.1.7.

[2] This translation is based on that of Ingalls. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyākara's Treasury* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968) 815. Changes have been made as the readings found in *Kāvya-prakāśa* and *Subhāṣita-ratna-kośa* differ somewhat.

[3] CC Antya 1.85–6.

[4] *Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.15, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya 1.99.

[5] It may be open to question whether Rūpa had actually composed this verse by 1517 AD as the date of publication of *Vidagdha-mādhava* is given in the colophon of that work as 1535, by which date the concept of *bhakti-rasa* would have been a familiar one throughout the community of Caitanya followers. The word *rasa* has been translated in various ways even within this short introduction: "mood" (Ingalls), "sentiment" (De and others), "aesthetic rapture" (Masson), "sacred rapture" (Delmonico), and "mellow" (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī) are some of the more frequently used renderings.

[6] One of Rūpa's contributions to Vaiṣṇava literature is an analysis of the elements of the classical Sanskrit play in a work named *Nāṭaka-candrikā*. The discussion found in this chapter of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* has drawn on that text.

[7] Sushil Kumar De, *Early History of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1961), 148.

[8] I find the arguments given by Dr. De to be only partially persuasive in the case of DKK. The work is dated 1495 AD in the colophon, but this unlikely date could be attributable to scribal error. The work is dedicated to "a friend living in Govardhana" which tradition holds to be a reference to Raghunātha Dāsa, which indicates the likelihood that Rūpa was in Vraja when he wrote it. It is also fairly mature, and it is doubtful that a 17 or 18-year old Rūpa would have been able to write a work of this caliber. Other authorities have also found this date problematic and offer various other possible dates, up to 1549. See Naresh Chandra Jana, *Vṛndāvanera Chaya Gosvāmī* (Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1970) 117–120.

[9] De, however, holds (without giving any particular reason) that this is an "ingenious substitution" for *sat-kavi*. De, *Early History*, 647 fn. Nowhere else does Rūpa particularly praise Sanātana for his qualities as a poet.

[10] *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.1.183. *rūpa-sākara mallika āilā tomā dekhibāre*. This could mean Rūpa and Sākara Mallik; indeed, the context seems to confirm this. 2.1.174 has Dabir Khās with no reference as to which of the brothers it means. Sākar cannot be found in the Persian or Arabic. Delmonico says that it is a title which means 'respected sir.' Neil Delmonico, "Sacred Rapture: A Study of the Religious Aesthetic of Rūpa Gosvāmī" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1990) 279.

[11] *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, 1.1.151–2, 1.9.192, 3.10.263. See Jānā, *Vṛndāvanera*, 37.

[12] The same instruction was given to both Rūpa and Sanātana and is referred to several times in *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*: 1.10.90, 1.25.215, 2.1.218, 2.4.218, etc.

[13] *Bhaktiratnākara* (1.817) speaks of a *Mathurā-mahimā* as one of sixteen titles authored by Rūpa Gosvāmī. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, however, says that Sanātana based his researches on the holy places on the basis of a *Mathurā-māhātmya*, attributed to the *Varāha* or *Skānda Purāṇa* (CC Ādi 25.215). In fact there is an extant edition of *Mathurā-māhātmya* written by Rūpa Gosvāmī which consists of quotations from several Purāṇic sources.

[14] *Ekadeśānusāri* (*Sābitya-darpaṇa* 6.319). *Samṅhāta* is a subvariety of the *khaṇḍa-kāvya* which more closely describes the *dūta-kāvya*: *Yatraikam artham ekena sargeṇaiva tu varṇayet/ ekena chandasā tat tu sāṅghātākhyam udāhṛtam//* (*Kāvyaadarśa*). In the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava corpus, Jīva Gosvāmī's *Mādhava-mahotsava* (1555) is the earliest Kṛṣṇa-centered *mahā-kāvya*, while Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's *Govinda-līlāmṛta* is

the best known. Other well-known works of the genre are Karṇapūra's *Kṛṣṇābhnikā-kaumudī* and Viśvanātha's *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*.

[15] M. R. Kāle, *Meghadūta*, 8th edition (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974) vi. About this feature of *Sanskrit kāvya*, Ingalls in *Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyākara's Treasury* writes: "The basic canon of Sanskrit poetry is that no matter how long the poem, each stanza must in itself evoke the requisite mood." (p. 18) Also, "When it is the plot of the narrative that holds our interest and furnishes our delight rather than a mood or suggestion induced by poetic means, we are not dealing with *kāvya*." (p. 2)

[16] E.g., US 11, 17, 25, 29, 30; HD 15, 18, 21, 24, 30.

[17] The sequence of the voyage is different in the two works. In *Uddhava-sandēśa*, the trajectory is from Mathurā and principally recapitulates the trip Kṛṣṇa took with Akrūra from Vraja to the city when he left Vṛndāvana. While in *Hamsadūta*, the voyage has no scriptural precedent. It starts from an unknown location on the banks of the Yamunā and follows an erratic and indirect trajectory through a number of Kṛṣṇa's principal *līlā-sthalis* before ending in Mathurā.

[18] *Padyāvalī*, 239. Rūpa Gosvāmī has evidently edited the verse slightly to make it Rādhā's words to a sakhi. The original verse attributed to Dharmakīrti, as found in the *Sadukti-karṇāmṛta* 929 (which Rūpa likely had access to) and various other anthologies, is spoken in the voice of a male lover. Another verse in the same vein is found in *Amaru-śataka* 102:

She is in the house and she is in all directions;  
she is in front and she is behind;  
she is on the bed and she is on every path of me  
as I suffer with separation from her.

Oh! Oh! O my mind! There is no other reality!  
 She is who she is! She! She! She!  
 Is this then how one comes to realize  
 the doctrine of non-duality?

[19] Kalikumār Datta, *Bengal's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature* (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1974) 10.

[20] Chintaharan Chakravarty, ed., *Manodūta* (Calcutta, 1937). A full account of Bengal's contribution to the genre can be found in J. B. Chaudhuri's *Baṅgīya-dūtakāvyetibāsaḥ*, *Prācya-vāṇī Research Series*, vol. 5 (Calcutta, 1953).

[21] See HD 43–44.

[22] Both *mandākrāntā* (attacked slowly) and *śikharīṇī* (possessing peaks) are *atyāṣṭi* meters containing 17 syllables to a foot. *Mandākrāntā*:  
 ---, ooooo, - - - - - / *Śikharīṇī*: o - - - -, ooooo - - - - - /

[23] Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha Bhakti: The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[24] Friedhelm Hardy has also shown the relation of Madhavendra Purī's devotional mood and that of the Alvars of South India. "Madhavendra Purī: a Link between Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and South Indian Bhakti," *JRAS* (1974): 23–41.

[25] *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 4.197), which is the verse which is quoted below by Mādhavendra, originally found in *Padyāvalī* (330).

[26] *Anubhāṣya* to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 4.178).

[27] BhP 10.32.20.

[28] This verse is quoted three times in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: Ādi 4.23, Madhya 8.89 and 13.160.

[29] For example, to the gopīs: *mayyāveśya mano kṛātsnam vimuktā-*

śeṣa-vṛtti yat/ anusmaranto mām nityam acirān mām upaiśyasi (10.47.36) To Nanda and the cowherds: yāta yūyañ vrajañ tāta vayañ ca sneba-duḥkhitān/ jñātīn vo draṭṭum eṣyāmo vidbhāya subhṛdāñ sukham// (10.45.23)

[30] See HD 91.

[31] Jīva Gosvāmī, *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā*, ed. Chinmayi Chatterjee (Calcutta: Jadavpur University, 1980), para. 164: *na hy atrādhyātma-vidyā śreyaskarī bhavati...sādhārāṇa-bhaktānām apy anupadeyatvenoktatvāt. Na tac-cbravaṇena viraba-jvālā śamyati.*

[32] CC Antya 1.65, *Kṛṣṇake bābir nābi kariba Vraja baite/ Vraja chāri Kṛṣṇa kabhu nā jāy kāñbhāte/* The absence of a resolution to the HD and US can be taken as further evidence substantiating the earliness of their composition.

[33] *Bhavatyah śrīmad-gokule tatraiva vartante, kintu mayaiva kala-kṣepaṇārtham anyathā prapañcitam. Lalita-mādhava* (10.261).

[34] This is stated in Pv 312ff, UN 15.185–7, LBhag 1.4.471, BRS 2.3.129, NatC. E.g., *barer līlāviśeṣasya prakāśyānusārataḥ/ varṇita-virabhāvasthā goṣṭha-vāmabhruvām asau// vṛndārāṇye viharatā sadā rāsādi-vibhramaiḥ/ bariṇā vraja-devinām virabo 'sti na karbicit//* UN 15.185–6.

[35] UN 15.3. The verse appears to be Bhojadeva's (*Sarasvatī-kañṭhābharāṇa* 5.53): *na vinā vipralambhena sambhogah puṣṭim aśnute/ kaśāyite hi vastrāḍau bhūyo rāgo 'bhivardhate/*

[36] BhP 10.14.37.

[37] See Śrī Jīva's commentary to UN 15.187.

[38] This is explained in detail in my article "Does Kṛṣṇa Marry the Gopīs in the End?" *Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies* 5, no. 4 (1997): 49–110.

[39] Cf. BRS 1.5.74,77–8: *kṛṣṇānvayād guṇātīta-praudhānanda-mayā api/ bhānty amī triguṇotpāna-sukha-duḥkha-mayā iva//...prāyaḥ sukha-mayāḥ śītā uṣṇā duḥkha-mayā iva/ citreyaṁ paramānanda-sāndrāpy uṣṇā ratir matā// śitair bhāvair baliṣṭhais tu puṣṭā śītāyate hy asau/ uṣṇais tu ratir atyuṣṇā*

*tāpayantiva bhāsate*// An analogous position is argued by the poeticians, who differentiate the personal emotion from the sentiment produced as a result of poetry. Otherwise, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and other poetry which is filled with distressing events would not be aesthetically pleasing.

[40] BṛBhāg 1.7.126–7: *tathāpi sambhoga-sukhād api stutaḥ sa ko 'py anirvacyatamo manoramah/ pramoda-rāśi. pariṇāmato dhruvam tatra sphurettad-rasikaika-vedyaḥ*// *tac-choka-duḥkhoparamasya paścāc cittam yataḥ pūrṇatayā prasannam/ samprāpta-sambhoga-mahāsukhena sampannavat tiṣṭhati sarvadaiva*// In BṛBhāg, Sanātana does not describe a return to Vraja in the *prakaṭa-lilā*, rather he speaks of regular departures for two month periods from the *nitya-lilā*, thus introducing *dūraḥpravāsa* even there. But even here, in these verses, the pleasures of separation seem to be judged by the union which follows it.

[41] Śrī Jiva's commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.5.74). *Gopāla-campū* (1.1.26–7). Viśvanātha Cakravartī stresses the inherently pleasurable aspects of separation in his commentary under the same verses.

[42] See Rūpa's *Vidagdha-madhava* 2.10, cited at *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 2.52.

[43] These and other subjects have been discussed in Rūpa's *Ujvala-nīlamanī*, where a large number of verses from both *Uddhava-sandēśa* and *Haṁsadūta* have been quoted. One can look to the endnotes of this edition for the appropriate references. Quotes of *Haṁsadūta* and *Uddhava-sandēśa* in Rupa's *Ujvala-nīlamanī* are many: 17 from *Uddhava-sandēśa*, 11 from *Haṁsadūta*, principally in chapters 13 and 15.

[44] De, *Early History*, 650–1.

[45] This quote and those which follow are found in the same work, 646–649. More of De's comments in the same vein can be found in the article "Sanskrit Devotional Literature" in *Aspects of Sanskrit Literature* (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Ltd., 1959), 101–149.

There he admits Rūpa's "highly sensuous pictorial fancy and inexhaustible lyrical and musical gift," but adds that "the profuse and overwrought rhetoric often obscures the reality of the emotion and gives it an appearance of spectacular sensibility, while the incessant straining after purely verbal and metrical effect does not always give us convincing visual pictures. No doubt, Rūpa's efforts bear witness alike to his literary skill, learning and devotion, but we often miss in them the true accent of poetry, as well as the devotional fervor and touching quality of self-expression, the flavour of a simple and lovable personality which is so conspicuous, for instance, in the less artistic effusions of his friend Raghunātha dāsa." (p. 149)

[46] Especially, A. B. Keith in *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920) and *The Sanskrit Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924).

[47] Sushil Kumar De, *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyaya, 1962). There (page 2) he describes nascent modernizing of Bengali literature as "full of vitality and versatility, critical and cultured, intensely personal and self-regulated, apparently defiant of all the laws, of standards, of conventions..." In short, everything that Sanskrit is not.

[48] Ingalls, *Sanskrit Poetry*, 47.

[49] Leonard Nathan, *The Transport of Love: The Meghadūta of Kālidāsa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) 2-3.

[50] Ibid, 10. This is confirmed by the Sanskrit professors of poetics who said that the basic ornament of all poetry was hyperbole (*atīśayokti*) called *sarvālaṅkāra-sāmānya-rūpam* by Ānandavardhana in his commentary to Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaālaṅkāra*, 2.85. See discussion, S. K. De, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1988) 50-57.



[51] Ingalls, *Sanskrit Poetry*, 48.

[52] "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in *Selected Essays*. Published in *20th Century Poetry and Poetics*, 2nd ed. Gary Geddes, ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), 477.

[53] Nathan, *Transport of Love*, 7.

[54] Which is precisely the point that Mammaṭa is making when he quotes the *yaḥ kaumāra-baraḥ* verse. The soul of poetry is *rasa*. *Vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam*.

[55] An interesting comparison between Amaru's collection of love poems and Śaṅkarācārya's religious poetry is found in Lee Siegel's *Fires of Love, Waters of Peace: Passion and Renunciation in Indian Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983).

[56] *sattvodrekād akhaṇḍa-svaprakāśānanda-cinmayah/ vedyāntara-sparśa-śūnyo brahmāsvāda-sahodarah// lokottara-camatkāra-prāṇah kaiścīt pramātr̥bbih/ svākāravād abhinnaatvenāyam āsvādyate rasaḥ//* SD 3.2–3. There are numerous editions of this work. The numbering is not always consistent. I am using Satyavrat Singh, ed., *Sābitya-darpaṇa*, by Viśvanātha Kavirāja (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Vidyabhawan, 1969)

[57] *rase sārāś camatkārah sarvatrāpy anubhūyate tac camatkāra-sāratve sarvatrāpy adbhuto rasaḥ/* Jiva Gosvāmī also quotes this verse in his commentary to BRS 4.2.12 and the idea in the beginning of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-śeṣa*. *Camatkāra* is explained by Masson as "an onomatopoeic word associated with drawing in one's breath in marvel or of smacking one's lips in pleasure."

[58] *sa-bijo'pi kavir jñeyah sa sarvāgama-kovidah/ sarasaḥ pratibhā-śālī yadi syād uttamas tadā//*

[59] *prātaḥ-pañkaja-kuṭmala-dyuti-padam tat-keśarollāsavān, artho'bhyantara-saurabha-pratinibham vyaṅgam camatkāri yat/ dvi-trair yad rasikaś ciraṁ sabhḍayair bhṛṅgair ivāsvādyate tat kāvyam na punaḥ pramatta-*

*kukaver yat kiñcid ujjalpitam// Prema-pattana*. Quoted in Ananta dāsa, *Rasa-darśana* (Radha Kund: Caitanya Śāstra Mandira, 1976), 22.

[60] *yad amita-rasa-śāstre vyañji vaidagdhya-vṛndam, tad-aṇum api na vetun kalpate kāmī-lokaḥ/ tad akhilam api yasya prema-sindhau na kiñcin mithunam ajita-gopī-rūpam etad vibhāti//* (Jīva Gosvāmī, GC 1.24.45)

[61] *PrītiS*, para. 112.

[62] *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (Ādi 11.105–110). At the beginning of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-śeṣa*, attributed to Śrī Jīva, four verses from the *Bhāgavata* are quoted to support this precise point: 1.5.10, 3.32.19, 10.60.45, and 10.1.4.

[63] The term *rati* is synonymous here with *sthāyi-bhāva*. *Rati* is being described as the raw material for *rasa*, or sacred rapture.

[64] *bhakti-nirdbhūta-doṣāṇām prasannojjvala-cetasām/  
śrī-bhāgavata-raktānām rasika-saṅga-raṅginām//  
jīvanī-bhūta-govinda-pāda-sevā-sukha-śrīyām/  
premāntaraṅga-bhūtāni kṛtyāny evānutiṣṭhatām//  
bhṛdayeṣu virājanti saṁskāra-yugalojjvalā/  
ratir ānanda-rūpaiva nīyamānā tu rasyatām//* BRS 2.1.6–10.

[65] *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Ādi 16.101.

[66] The literary qualities which they admit as an embellishment of the principal sentiment of a composition under three broad categories: *ojas* (energy), *prasāda* (lucidity), and *mādhurya* (sweetness). *Kāvya-prakāśa* (8.68). *Sābitya-darpaṇa* (8.1).

[67] Devotees can get an idea of this by looking at the chapter on Digvijayī Paṇḍita (CC Ādi 16.72ff) where Mahāprabhu lists five virtues, of which the first two are *śabdālaṅkāras*, the last three, *arthālaṅkāras*.

[68] *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-śeṣa*, which is attributed to Jīva Gosvāmī, follows *Sābitya-darpaṇa* except in its examples.

[69] One can look at the endnotes to these verses to get an idea of the way this functions. See S. K. De, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, vol. 2, 157–9. *Dhvanyāloka*. *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* devotes a large portion of chapter four to the subject. The different verses of the *Uddhava-sandēśa* correspond to the different subdivisions of *guṇibhūta-vyāṅgya*.

[70] Some good translations of Sanskrit poetry that I recommend, all of which contain illuminating introductions which I have drawn on in discussing the questions raised here: Hank Heifetz, ed., *The Origin of the Young God: Kālidāsa's Kumārasambhava* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Daniel H. H. Ingalls, trans., *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); Leonard Nathan, *The Transport of Love: The Meghadūta of Kālidāsa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); W. S. Merwin and J. Moussaieff Masson, trans., *Sanskrit Love Poetry* (N.Y. : Columbia University Press, 1977); Lee Siegel, *Fires of Love Waters of Peace: Passion and Renunciation in Indian Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983).

### Notes to *Uddhava-sandēśa*

[1] As a part of his description of the ten stages of love in separation: *cintātra jāgarodvegau tānavam malināṅgatā/ pralāpo vyādbhirunmādo mobo mṛtyur daśa daśa//* (UN 15.167), Rūpa states (UN 15.180) that Kṛṣṇa also undergoes similar transformations in the absence of the gopīs. Viṣṇudāsa, in his *Svātmāprabodhinī* commentary to that verse, cites *Uddhava-sandēśa* 1–2 as supplementary examples.

[3] The following section (3–10) is cited in Viṣṇudāsa's *Svātmāprabodhinī* commentary on the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* at 15.163 as a supplementary example of messages sent by Kṛṣṇa to the gopīs.

[4] Cf. BhP 10.46.3. Kṛṣṇa's speech begins here and continues

until verse 128. Since this fills the greater part of the text of the poem, no quotation marks have been used.

[5] Cf. *Haṁsadūta* 2.

[7] Rūpa Goswāmī in the colophon to his *Dānakelikaumudī* indicates that he was living at Nandgaon, or Nandīśvara. It is evident from the numerous places which are connected to Rūpa in the Nandagrāma area that he was living there. The *Uddhava-sandēśa* also shows a knowledge of the Nandagrāma area as will be shown in the notes. According to A. W. Entwistle, *Braj: A Place of Pilgrimage* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1987), "No text earlier than the sixteenth century associates Nandgaon with Kṛṣṇa, and so it appears that the concept of his having grown up there gained acceptance as stories about his courtship with Rādhā, who lived at Barsana, became popular." Cf. Rūpa Goswāmī, *Mathurā Mābātmya*, ed. and Hindi trans. Kṛṣṇadāsa (Kusumasarovara, 1958) v. 453. The route which Kṛṣṇa describes to Uddhava is not perfectly straight, following the Yamunā north from Mathurā as far as Cīr Ghāṭ, which, if the same as Shergarh, is the only site which is quite out of the way. Uddhava is then to turn west to Pasauli and Sahar before turning northwest through Rahera, Pisawa, and Ajnokh and finally arriving in Nandgaon.

[12] Gokarṇa is described in Entwistle, *Braj*, 323 and Brk 5.320. It is at the northern extremity of the current city limits of Mathurā, near the Yamunā.

[13] Kṛṣṇa's arrival in Mathurā is treated with favor by the author of the *Bhāgavata*, and the theme of the women of the town seeing him for the first time is described with relish. See BhP 10.41.24–31 and 10.44.14–18. See also *Haṁsadūta* 35–39.

[14] These events are described in BhP 10.34. Ambikāvana is identified with the area surrounding Mahāvidyā Devī, about two kilome-

ters to the west of Gokarṇa. Entwistle, *Braj*, 321 and *Bhakti-ratnākara* 5.1847–56.

[15] Reference to the killing of the elephant Kuvalayāpiḍa at the gates of Mathurā, BhP 10.43.1–15. Entwistle, *Braj*, 317, describes the existence of a shrine to Kṛṣṇa, the killer of Kuvalāpiḍa, near Rangbhumi, where Kṛṣṇa also killed Kaṁsa. This is not likely to be the place referred to here as this elephant is said to have been defeated by Kṛṣṇa outside the gates of the city.

[16] References to BhP 10.28 and 10.39–40 respectively. Brahmanuṇḍa in Vṛndāvana is sometimes identified with Akrūrātīrtha. This is more likely the Akrūrātīrtha on the Yamunā banks between Mathurā and Vṛndāvana town. It is now not far from the Bhatror Bihari temple. See Rūpa's *Mathurā-māhātmya* (457) and Brk 5.1857–1864.

[17] Closeby to Akrūrātīrtha (verse 16), also near Bhatror, is the place called Bhojana Tila. Narahari calls Bhatror "Akrūra Grāma" and this place "Bhojanasthala." (Brk 5.1865–1874). Raghunātha Dāsa describes the site in *Vraja-vilāsa-stava* 86. Reference to BhP 10.23.

[18] Both the *lilā* described here and the site name of Koṭikā are obscure. There is a Koṭban north of Kosi on the road to Delhi, but this is far off track and unlikely to be intended in this verse.

[19] In *Gopāla-campū* (1.9.64) this is said to be the place that Kṛṣṇa and his family first camped after crossing the river from Gokula at Vatsakriḍā. From here the family moved on to Nandagrāma.

[21] The story of Kālīya is found in BhP 10.16–17. A more descriptive verse is found in *Haṁsadūta* 29–30. There are two Cīraghāṭas in the Braj area. One is in Vṛndāvana town, the other further north on the banks of the Yamunā, in the town known as Shergarh. It seems that the latter site is the older of the two. Cf. Entwistle, *Braj*, 392.

[25] Vardhahasta may well be the village of Barhoṭa which lies a

few kilometers northwest of Chattikara. It is not mentioned as a place of any significance in any book on Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. The village of Pasauli is identified by Narahari as Sarpasthali, the place where Aghāsura was killed (Brk 5.1610). The story of the killing of Agha is found in BhP 10.12. Cf. Entwistle, *Braj*, 394.

[27] The word *śālmālā* means "silk-cotton tree," *semur* in Hindi. I was not able to find a correspondence for this place, other than Narisemari, which Narahari identifies as *śyāmakinnari* (Brk 5.1273). Possibly Siwāl.

[28] Sahāra is mentioned in Brk 5.1207 (as Sāhāra) and *Dānakelicintāmaṇi* 3. It is situated on the crossroads of the Vṛndāvana-Barsana road and the Chāta-Mathurā road. Entwistle, *Braj*, 385, says that this was formerly an important administrative town in the Mughal era until the time of Aurangzeb. It is no longer a part of the Caurasi Kos Parikrama.

[29] Rahelā is modern Raheṛā, which is not mentioned by Entwistle. This village is about 2 1/2 km. NW of Sahāra. No *līlās* are said to have taken place there and it is not a stop on the Braja *parikramā*. No other literary text associates this place with the *līlā* mentioned in this verse. "Charming confusion" refers to *helā* (carelessness) one of the "natural graces" (*sattvaja-alaṁkāras*) of the poets. Cf. UN 11.11.

[30] Pṛitaśara must be the village Pisāwa, also known as Pisayo, which lies in a direct line from Raheṛa to Nandgaon. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa reconstructs the name to Pipāsāvana. Cf. Entwistle, *Braj*, 384.

[32] About 1 1/2 km. NW of Pisāwa is the village of Ajnokh, named Ānjanak by Narahari. He identifies this village as Vidyudvāri or Bijoāri. Narahari's account of the pastimes here match the description in this verse. Brk 5.1169–1176.

[33] The place named Sauyātrika, where Akrūra saw the footprints of Kṛṣṇa, is named Akrūrasthāna or Akrūra Kund. It lies just south of Nandgaon on the road to Barsana. Akrūra's arrival in Vṛndāvana and his first vision of Kṛṣṇa's footprints is described in BhP 10.38.24 ff.

[35] "Involuntary expressions of affection" refers to another of the "natural graces," *moḥṭāyita*. See UN 11.47–8.

[36] The 11 verses from here to 45 are separate statements made by the gopīs awaiting Kṛṣṇa's return at the end of the day. In BhP 10.15.42–43, the first signs of the gopīs' love for Kṛṣṇa are described taking place on such an occasion.

[38] A conceit of Sanskrit poetry is that the peacock rejoices at the coming of the rainclouds. This is probably because the rainy season is the peacock's mating season which results in his celebrated dance. This verse is quoted at UN 10.87 as an example of the *uddīpana* of dusk, when Kṛṣṇa returns home from his day's work in the pasturing ground.

[40] This verse is quoted at UN 15.200 as an example of *āgati*, or Kṛṣṇa's return after a short absence (*sampanna-sambhoga*) in a nonmiraculous fashion. This is in contrast with *prādurbhāva* for which the example is BhP 10.32.2.

[43] This is an example of *vivvoka*, or *bibboka*, which is described in UN 11.52–55 as an affectation of indifference toward a beloved object through pride and conceit, "haughty indifference." See also *Sābityadarpaṇa* 139. In this verse, Kṛṣṇa is so bewildered by the gopīs' attitude of indifference that he cannot go forward to see his mother after a day's absence from her. Thus her friend tells her to beautify herself in a gesture of affection to Kṛṣṇa so that he will be released from the grip of this mood. The next verse contains a similar conceit.

[45] This verse is used as an example of *praṇaya-māna*, or the anger of the beloved. Such anger arises whether there is a cause or not, for the movements of love are like those of a snake. (UN 15.102, paraphrasing Bhoja's *Sarasvatikaṇṭhābharāṇa* 5.48.)

[50] Verses 49–61 are again the words of the gopīs, here being in the theme of *māna*, "love spats." Note Lalitā's regrets at having instigated Rādhā's *māna* in HD 114. Verse 63 shows one way that this *māna* could be brought to an end. This verse is cited in UN's chapter on the *sthāyī-bhāvas* as an example of *prauḍha-prema*, well-developed love, in which there is an inability to support separation from the loved one (14.73–4). Viṣṇudāsa also cites *Amaru* 70:

"O foolish one,  
in your simple-mindedness,  
what pointless activities have you taken up  
in order to pass the time of day?  
Get angry with your lover;  
stop being so patient;  
stop being so straightforward with him!"  
Upon receiving instructions of this sort  
from her friend, she replied,  
a look of fright upon her face,  
"Don't talk so loud,  
or the Lord of my vital airs,  
who dwells in my heart,  
will hear you."

[51] This verse is quoted at UN 7.79 in the chapter on the *dūti*, or go-between. It illustrates an indirect message, in this particular instance in the presence of both the *nāyikā* and the *nāyaka*, Kṛṣṇa. The



sakhī is *pragalbhā* (aggressive), rather than *mṛdvī* (self-effacing). This verse therefore has a double meaning (*vyāṅgya*). The word *rāginī* can mean either "angry" as it has been rendered in this translation or "deeply in love." The word *saṁrambbhinī* in the third strophe can also have a dual meaning of "angry" or "eager." Then Rādhā's looks, described here as "half-moon-shaped scowls," become ambiguous and perhaps more inviting. The entire first two strophes of the Sanskrit verse can be read in two ways, that which has been given and as follows: "There are many proud girls in Vraja, but in front of my girlfriend, who loves you and who alone is worthy of your companionship, they should not be approached."

[52] UN 13.65. Given in the chapter on *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* as an instance of *avahitthā*, or concealment due to shyness and deception.

[53] Quoted at UN 8.35 as an example of *nāyakābbedyā*, the quality of the sakhī by which she is unmoved by the pleas of the hero. Viṣṇudāsa identifies the speaker of this verse as Lalitā.

[54] Quoted in the chapter on the *nāyikā* (UN 5.51) as an example of the *pragalbhā nāyikā* and how she is extremely sharp when angry with her lover (*māne 'tyanta-karkaṣā*). Viṣṇudāsa cites another example from *Amaru* (38):

That love  
 where anger is a twisted eyebrow,  
 where a scolding is given in silence,  
 where reconciliation comes from a smile,  
 and satisfaction from a look,  
 has gone down to destruction, you see.  
 You may fall down at my feet,  
 but that will not free me from my rage,  
 for I have been made treacherous.

[55] In contrast to the previous verse, this is an example of the anger of a *madhyā nāyikā* (UN 5.30), in which there is only a hint of the arrogance shown by the *pragalbhā nāyikā*. There is a double meaning in this verse: the word *punnāga* can mean both a type of flower (the white lotus, *calophyllum inophyllum*) or "elephant amongst men," an epithet of Kṛṣṇa. Thus, the instruction to the "black bee" to go elsewhere actually becomes an invitation to a tryst in the bower. Viṣṇudāsa also cites Karṇapūra's *Alaṁkāra-kaustubha* (5.72).

[56] Though the word *hari* in the first line of this verse can be taken to mean either Kṛṣṇa, or "lion," the latter reading is the one taken by the second sakhī.

[57] The word *kṛṣṇasāra* refers to a type of deer or to Kṛṣṇa himself. The sakhī is singing to let Kṛṣṇa know the location of his beloved.

[59] The pun here is *kṛṣṇanakaṇṭha*, "neck of Kṛṣṇa," but at the same time, "blue-necked peacock." In the next part of the verse, the reference to the peacock feather refers directly to Kṛṣṇa, but maintains the conceit of the peacock, which is known for his ability to kill snakes. In the first line of this verse, *arālāṅganā* could be taken to mean either "curved [coiled or snake] woman" as well as "crooked/ designing/unchaste woman." The sakhī in the second half of the verse is addressed as a simpleton indicating that under ordinary circumstances, she would be unable to compete with the other women in the midst of whom she has stationed herself. In response the addressed heroine answers with confidence: "Yes, friend, what you say is correct, but see this passionate (or as a peacock, *mada-kala*, "sweet-singing") hero is coming to my rescue."

[60] The pun is on the word *kṛṣṇavartma* which means both fire (because it turns everything black) and Kṛṣṇa's path. The fire, usu-

ally of wood or cow dung, being extremely smoky, would normally be outside the house.

[61] In this verse, the quick-thinking gopī revises her description of an encounter with Kṛṣṇa into something entirely different after being warned by her girlfriend of the presence of her mother-in-law. The word *hasta* can mean both hand and the trunk of an elephant and *kṛṣṇa* is taken as an adjective meaning "black" in the last strophe. Elephants are known to become intoxicated and unruly on occasion. This is the ornament commonly called *vakrokti* in Sanskrit poetics.

[62] The reader is expected to take *vṛndāraṇye mama vidadbhire nirbharotkaṇṭhitāni kṛṇollāsaiḥ sapadi bariṇā* once as a passive voice construction in which *bariṇā* is in the instrumental case and once as an active voice construction in which *bariṇāḥ*, "deer," is read as a nominative plural. In the third pāda, the sakhī speaks by assuming the first meaning, but in the fourth, the heroine cleverly dissimulates by pointing out the possibility of the second meaning. *Sāraṅga* means spotted antelope, a relative of the deer.

[64] Viṣṇudāsa describes this as a conversation between Viśākhā and Rādhā. It is cited as an example of Kṛṣṇa's dressing up as a woman to gain access to Rādhā (UN 15.244). This became a favorite theme for the Vaiṣṇava poets and appears in *Vidagdha-mādhava*, *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, *Kṛṣṇabhāvanāmṛta*, *Prema-samputīkā*, *Camathāra-candrikā* and other works. Viṣṇudāsa also cites in this context *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 4.8.34, where laughter and eros are given as compatible moods: "I am your cousin, cruel one, how is it that you don't recognize me? My beautiful one, come and give me an affectionate embrace! When Kṛṣṇa, disguised as a girl, said these words aloud before her in-laws, Rādhā was quick to recognize him and she smiled."

[66] The next series of verses (66–75) contains statements by the

gopīs as they become aware of Kṛṣṇa's imminent departure to Mathurā and as he is actually leaving. See note to verses 67 and 70.

[67] This verse is given by Rūpa as an example of *bhāvī pravāsa*, imminent departure (UN 15.159). Viṣṇudāsa adds the section 66–69 as additional examples as well as *Lalita-mādhava* 3.2–3, etc.

[70] Viṣṇudāsa cites verses 70–75 in his commentary on UN 15.160 which describes separation as it is taking place (*bhavan pravāsaḥ*).

[72] This verse contains a rare example of Rūpa Gosvāmī's using a mild version of *lātānuprāsa*, a conceit whereby a line or segment of several words is repeated exactly with differing meanings. Thus the word *candrabāsaḥ* which is used to describe Kṛṣṇa of the moonlike smile, also has the meaning of scimitar, or "curved sword."

[76] Pāvanasarovara is also known as Pān Sarovar. In *Mathurā-māhātmya* (453), Rūpa Gosvāmī says that one should bathe here before going to take *darśana* of the deities in the Nandīśvara temple. *Pāvane sarasī snātvā kṛṣṇam nandīśvare girau/ dr̥ṣṭvā nandaṁ yaśodām ca sarvābhīṣṭam avāpnuyāt//* See also Raghunātha Dāsa's *Vraja-vilāsa-stava* (59) and Brk 5.935–41. It would appear that Rūpa Gosvāmī lived on the shores of this tank, and there is also a site commemorated as the cottage of Sanātana Gosvāmī (Entwistle, *Braj*, 379).

[77] Viṣṇudāsa cites this next series of verses (77–89), as well as a large number of others, as examples of the *nāyikā* as *proṣitabhartṛkā*, the woman separated from her lover.

[82] Quoted by Rūpa at UN 13.5 as an example of the *vyabhicāribhāva* known as *nirveda*, or despondency, as produced by separation. BRS 2.4.10: "If these ears do not hear the chatter made by Kṛṣṇa, then I am as good as deaf; and if these eyes do not see him, then I am as good as blind." This verse is an almost exact paraphrase

of a verse attributed to Caitanya Mahāprabhu found in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.2.45:

[83] Quoted at UN 10.88 as an example of Vṛndāvana as an *uddīpana*, "kindler of divine emotion."

[85] Quoted in UN 15.161 as an example of *bbūta-pravāsa*, "separation as an event having already taken place."

[91] BhP 10.46 (47–9): "At dawn, the people of Vraja saw the golden chariot standing before Nanda's door and asked themselves whose it could be. 'Has Kāṁsa's old emissary Akrūra, the fellow who took the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā, come back again? Is his purpose this time to take the flesh of our bodies in order to perform a *śrāddha* ceremony for his dead master Kāṁsa?' As the women were saying this, Uddhava arrived after having completed his morning ablutions."

[93] The cows are considered an *uddīpana* for *madhura-rasa*, a reminder of Kṛṣṇa (UN 11.81).

[94] Brahmā steals the calves and cowherds in BhP 10.13–14. The relationship with the mothers of the other cowherd boys is described especially in 10.13.25–6.

[95] There are several places where Kṛṣṇa's cowherding activities with the other cowherd boys are described. This particular theme is mentioned in BhP 10.12.6: "If Kṛṣṇa went far away to look at some beautiful forest landscape, the boys would enjoy competing with one another to see who could touch him first."

[96] After the killing of Kāṁsa, Kṛṣṇa sends Nanda and the other cowherds home, promising them that he will return: 10.45.20–28. "Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma then approached Nanda and, embracing him, said: 'We were well cared for and raised by you, who loved our real father. Parents have more affection for their children than they have

even for themselves. The real mother and father are those who take care of the children of their friends as though they were their own. Now go back to Vraja, father. After we have brought happiness to our relatives here in Mathurā, we will come to see you and all our kinsfolk there, who suffer deeply on account of their love for us.' Having thus spoken gently to Nanda and the other cowherds, Acyuta affectionately gave them gifts of jewels, clothes, and brass pots and utensils. Overcome with emotion, Nanda embraced the two boys. His eyes filled with tears and he left for Vraja with his companions." As the Supreme Truth, Kṛṣṇa must fulfill his promise to his pure devotees.

[97–98] Yaśodā's feelings of separation are described in BRS 3.4.62–72. Just as there are ten stages of separation in *madhura-rasa* (see notes to HD 2 and US 1), a number of *anubhāvas* are listed in Yaśodā's separation (*viyoga*) from Kṛṣṇa. These are *cintā* (worrying), *viṣāda* (depression), *nirveda* (indifference), *jāḍya* (motionlessness), *dainya* (humility), *cāpala* (restlessness), *unmāda* (madness), and *moha* (illusion).

[101] This idea has its origins in BhP 10.47.1–3: "When the women of Vraja saw Kṛṣṇa's servant with his long arms and eyes like fresh lotus flowers, his yellow clothes and garland of pink lotuses, his effulgent handsome face and jewelled earrings, they became astonished and asked themselves, 'Who is this handsome person and whence has he come? How has he come to wear Kṛṣṇa's clothes and ornaments?' Surmising from these signs that he was a messenger from Kṛṣṇa, they surrounded him in great expectation." Sanātana quotes Uddhava's words from BhP 11.6.46 in which he states the devotee of Kṛṣṇa's determination to use his leftovers: *tvayōpayukta-srag-gandhavastrālaṅkāra-carcitāḥ/ ucchiṣṭa-bhojino dāsās tava māyām jayemahi//* "My

dear Lord, the garlands, scented substances, garments, ornaments, and other such things that have been offered to you may later be used by your servants. By partaking of these things and eating the remnants of food you have left, we will be able to conquer the illusory energy." Sanātana also points out that the garland was given to Uddhava by Kṛṣṇa before his leaving for Vraja. Rūpa gives further significance to this garland later in verse 118.

[103] Note that the promise Kṛṣṇa made in verse 10 not to burden the gopīs with any account of his suffering is here broken. But see Viśvanātha Cakravartī's comments in note to HD 2.

[107] *Svapna-sambhoga*. See HD 105 and note.

[108–115] The eight sakhī eternal beloved of Kṛṣṇa are given in various lists in the Purāṇas. Rūpa names them in UN 7.56 in the following order: Rādhā, Candrāvalī, Viśākhā, Lalitā, Śyāmā, Padmā, Śaivyā, and Bhadrā. He also names Tārā, Vicitrā, Gopālī, Dhaniṣṭhā, and Pālikā. Here in *Uddhava-sandēśa*, Dhanyā is a ninth name added to the usual eight which include Rādhā. Candrāvalī is often seen as Rādhā's chief competition, but as Rūpa says in UN 9.41–43, though there is an appearance of enmity between these competitors for Kṛṣṇa's affection, in the pain of separation even they come into a friendship based on their common pain. The example is given in *Lalita-mādhava* 3.39: Rādhā says to a mirage Candrāvalī while engaged in a futile search for the departed Kṛṣṇa, "O Candrāvalī! How fortunate I am to see you today, for your body has been made auspicious by the enemy of Kaṁsa Hari's repeated embraces. Quickly hold me in those arms which are filled with the fragrance of the flowers which decorated his ears and bring me back to life, for in separation from him I am almost dead." In this connection, Jīva has also pointed out that though the gopīs were jealous of Rādhā when Kṛṣṇa took her

from the scene of the *rāsa* dance, when she too was abandoned by Kṛṣṇa, they all felt sympathy for her, sharing in their common separation from Kṛṣṇa.

[109] Though Viśākhā and Lalitā are qualified to be *yūtheśvarīs*, or "leading contenders for Kṛṣṇa's affections," they choose to put their friendship with Rādhā before their feelings for Kṛṣṇa. They are known as *prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhīs*.

[112] In Rūpa's plays, Padmā and Śaivyā are allies of Candrāvali as Lalitā and Viśākhā are of Rādhā.

[116] This verse is quoted at UN 15.163 as an example of the way in which messages are sent back and forth from Yadusimha (Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā) and his beloved gopīs. In his *Svātma-prabodhini* commentary, Viṣṇudāsa cites the entire section (99–129) as supplementary examples.

[117] Compare HD 96. This verse is quoted by Rūpa (UN 13.48) as an example of *moha* (bewilderment arising from separation). Viṣṇudāsa cites *Haṁsadūta* 3–4 as supplementary examples. See also *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.4.95.

[118–119] The garland given to Uddhava by Kṛṣṇa at the time of departure is put to use. The powerful effects of *prasāda*, such as garlands, are mentioned frequently by the Gauḍīya poets. Numerous examples are given in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*, *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, etc. The *mañjarīs* are often described as having this as one of their duties, e.g., *Kṛṣṇabhāvanāmṛta* 8.26: "Then Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī came with the cāmpa flower garland the Lord had given her for Rādhā and placed it over her heart. How amazing the effects of lifeless objects! As soon as she felt the touch of that garland, Rādhā, who had become practically lifeless, was rejuvenated." Again, *Govinda-līlāmṛta* 8.9–11: "Just as Rādhā was expressing the intensity of her desire for union



with Kṛṣṇa, Tulasī Mañjarī appeared in the assembly of gopīs carrying Kṛṣṇa's guñja garland and the campaka flower buds he had given her to bring for Rādhārāṇī. Giving these gifts to Lalitā, she told her everything that Kṛṣṇa had been doing. Then Lalitā took the presents given by Kṛṣṇa which were indications that he would soon be meeting with Rādhā. They were so alluring on account of his bodily fragrance with which they were permeated. Lalitā placed the campaka buds behind Rādhā's ears and the string of guñja beads on her breast. The mere touch of those items felt to Rādhā like direct contact with Kṛṣṇa's body; she thrilled and the hairs on her skin stood erect as she shivered in ecstasy. She immediately got up to rush to meet Kṛṣṇa, but managed to compose herself after a moment [on realizing that he was not physically present there]."

[121] That Kṛṣṇa considers Rādhā to be his teacher of love is the essence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. Cf. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 4.124: "Rādhikā's love is my teacher, and I learn to dance from her. Her love constantly makes me dance until I lose myself." In the *Govinda-līlāmṛta* (8.77), Rādhā and Vṛndā have the following conversation:

"Whence come you, Vṛndā Devī?"

"I was just with Kṛṣṇa, dear friend."

"And where is he?"

"In the woods by Rādhā-kuṇḍa."

"What is he doing there?"

"He is learning to dance."

"And who is teaching him?"

"It is your image, Rādhā,  
revealing itself to him in every direction  
in every tree and creeper,

appearing like a Terpsichorean  
and making him follow behind, dancing."

[122] The *mādhavī* creeper winding around a *tamāla* or mango tree is often given as a symbol of the faithful wife.

[125] This verse is cited by Rūpa (UN 10.93) as an example of the *uddīpana* of the *kuñjas* of Vṛndāvana. Comp. HD 94. Here Kṛṣṇa tells Rādhā not to look at the *kuñja* which might cause her to suffer even more, while in the other verse, Rādhā deliberately looks at a reminder of Kṛṣṇa hoping that it will cause her to die.

[126] As in the *Bhāgavatam* itself, Rūpa doesn't resolve the tension of the separation. As in the *Meghadūta*, only promises of a union are given. Union itself is not established. However, in all of his major works, Rūpa stresses that Kṛṣṇa's departure from Vraja takes place only in the *prakaṣa-līlā* and never in the *nitya-līlā*. On the other hand, in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Sanātana postulates a regular departure to Mathurā in the *nitya-līlā*, one which lasts only two months.

[128] BhP 10.47.53–4.

[129] The prayers of Uddhava in glorification of the gopīs which follow his sojourn there (BhP 10.47.58–63) are an indication of this.

[130] Rūpa's poems are characterized by verses in which he uses his own name (Rūpa) and that of his brother and guru (Sanātana) in punning form. This verse would seem to be a prototype of this feature of his poetry; the word *rūpa* can only be interpreted here to mean Rūpa's name and Sanātana's name is absent.

[131] Note the parallelism in the final two verses here and in the HD. The guru, Sanātana Gosvāmī, is mentioned in the penultimate verse of each work, while a benedictory verse to Kṛṣṇa comes at the end. But whereas this poem is specifically dedicated to the pleasure

of his guru and Kṛṣṇa (as the one verse can be read in either way), *Haṁsadūta* is dedicated uniquely to the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa.

### Notes to *Haṁsadūta*

[2] UN 15.168. This verse is given by Rūpa himself as an example of *cintā* (worry) as the first of the ten stages of love in separation, when that separation is unintentional (*abuddhi-pūrvaka*). The ten stages are worry, wakefulness, inner disturbance, losing weight, physical unkeptness, incoherent and delirious speech, illness, madness, confusion, and death. Cf. UN 15.167: *cintātra jāgarodvegau tānavam malināṅgatā/ pralāpo vyādbir unmādo moho mṛtyur daśa daśa//* In his commentary to this verse, Viśvanātha describes Rādhā's state of mind: "Should I try to remain alive, even though it is so desperately painful? Or should I give up and just enter the fire or the Yamunā? But what if he were to come back to Vraja and find that I am no longer alive, what will he do then? Will he be so grieved that he too will die? Or will he too find some pretext to go on living? Alas, he is such an emotional lover that I am afraid that he will find it impossible. And how can I commit suicide knowing that he might be placed in such a quandary because of it? I may yet one day see his beautiful lotus face, if the fire of suffering does not first burn me to a cinder." Viśvanātha also points out that the "dizzying whirlpools" described in the verse could be understood as a reference to the state of *divyomāda* known as *udghūrṇā* (Cf. UN 14.192). Rūpa himself gives the *Lalita-mādhava*'s third act as exemplifying this extreme condition of love.

[3] Rūpa quotes this verse in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.4.95) as an example of the *vyabhicāri-bhāva* of *moha* (confusion). Viśvanātha says, "Though she came to the Yamunā to find relief from her feel-

ings of separation, they became a hundred times worse."

[8] The most advanced devotee, the *uttama adbhikārī*, makes no distinctions in the creation, seeing everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa.

[9] Cf. *Meghadūta* 6. *Tenārthitvaṁ tvayi vidhivaśād varabandhur gato'ham, yācñā moghā varam adbhiguṇe nādhame labdhakāmā*: "Hence it is that I, separated from my beloved by the power of destiny, proffer my petition to you. A request addressed to a man preeminent by his merits, even though unsuccessful, is to be preferred over one made to a base man, though its object be gained." There is a pun on the word *ham* which has swan as its primary meaning and a secondary meaning of ascetic; *parama*ham of course referring to an ascetic of the highest order, one who has subdued all his senses by abstract meditation (Monier-Williams).

[13] According to the *Uddhava-sandēśa*, Akrūra would have left with Kṛṣṇa from Nandagrāma. The route described here by Lalitā differs considerably. Furthermore, it shows little understanding of Vraja geography, making one suspect that Rūpa was not yet familiar with the region when he wrote this work.

[15] This verse uses the same double meaning as found in verse 9 above. It recalls the painful departure of Kṛṣṇa for Mathurā described in BhP 10.39, particularly 10.39.31. "The women of Vraja, overcome by the grief of separation repeated these words due to their attachment to Kṛṣṇa. Abandoning all shame, they sang his names while crying, 'Govinda, Dāmodara, Mādhava!'" Gopāla Cakravartī, in his commentary on this verse, proposes interpreting the name Akrūra as "he than whom no one is more cruel."

[16] The reference here is to BhP 10.22, the famous incident where Kṛṣṇa steals the clothes of the gopīs. There are two places known as Cīraghāt in present-day Vraja, one at Shergarh north of the town of

Vṛndāvana, the other in the town itself. Narahari says the two places are distinct, the events of the Kātyāyanī-pūjā taking place at Shergarh, the other occasion taking place after the *rāsa* dance. Gopāla Cakravartī mentions that to see a tree at the beginning of a voyage is an auspicious sign.

[17] The *rāsa līlā* is generally said to have taken place in Vṛndāvana itself. The word *ballīśaka* is defined as a circle dance of many women (*nārīṇāṃ maṇḍalākāraṃ nṛtyaṃ ballisakaṃ viduḥ*). *Rāsa* is further described as a circle dance in which the women alternately hold hands or the necks of the other dancers (*naṭigṛhītakaṇṭhīnāṃ anyonyāptakarastrīyām/nartakīnāṃ bhaved rāso maṇḍalibhūya nartanam//*).

[21] Govardhana, being well to the west of the Yamunā, would be totally out of the swan's way if he were headed to Mathurā.

[22] Indra is said to have cut off the wings of the mountains, who in former times could fly. The reference is to the Govardhana-dhāraṇa *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa described in BhP 10.18–19, through which Indra was defeated. Just as Kṛṣṇa's name was confirmed through the *abhiṣeka* by Indra and his elephant Airāvata, Govardhana's name as "increaser of the cows" was also confirmed.

[23] This verse is quoted in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* in the chapter on the *vyabhicārī bhāvas* as an example of *smṛti*, or remembrance, in this case upon seeing something that reminds one of Kṛṣṇa. (See also *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.4.130). The Pulindī girls refers to the tribal women of the Vraja area, also known as *śavarīs*. Their unrequited sensual love for Kṛṣṇa is of the same order as that of Kubjā and is often alluded to by Rūpa. Such references can be traced to BhP 10.21.17:

The Pulinda girls have been fulfilled,  
for when overcome by desire upon seeing him,

they coated their faces and breasts with the saffron powder  
 from glorious Kṛṣṇa's feet  
 which had adorned the breasts of his beloved  
 and then been smeared on the grasses.  
 By doing this, they were freed from the pains of love.

[24] *Ghana-rasa* means juice of the clouds, or water. Its intended meaning is "dense aesthetic pleasure" or "the flavor of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes." The word *ghana* means "cloud," to which Kṛṣṇa is often compared. The swan is named *rasika*, "one who knows the *rasas*."

[25] Tradition holds that Aṣṭāśura, the bull demon, was killed by Kṛṣṇa (BhP 10.36) near the village of Aring between Govardhana and Mathurā.

[27] The tree here is being compared to Nārāyaṇa, the swan to his conch, and the sun to his discus. This place is now called Akṣaya Baṭ in Vraja. In early Gauḍīya sources it is said to be near Siyara/Kajraut on the west bank of the Yamunā; now it is generally said to be in Bhaṇḍiravana on the east bank, near Māt. Entwistle, *Braja*, 392, Brk 5.1567, and *Vraja-vilāsa-stava* 93.

[28] Brahmastava, described in BhP10.14. According to Narahari Cakravartī, Brahmā prayed to Kṛṣṇa on this occasion at Ecomuhā village (Brk 5.1608). Raghunātha Dāsa calls this place Bhīrucatur-mukha (*Vraja-vilāsa-stava* 97). Nowadays, this event is associated with Caumuhan, not far from Pasauli, where Aghāsura was killed.

[29] The Kāliya-damana *līlā* is described in BhP 10.16–17.

[32] Madhuvana is usually described as the first of the twelve forests, Vṛndāvana being the twelfth.

[35–39] The theme of the women of Mathurā is inspired by the *Bhāgavatam*, 10.41.24–29.

[36] This verse is quoted in UN (13.86) in the chapter on *vyabbhicāri bhāvas* as an example of eagerness arising from the desire to see the beloved. Viśvanātha comments that the inability to tolerate the passage of time due to such hope is also characteristic of *mahābhāva*. He paraphrases the *Mathurā nāgarī* as follows: "I put on decorations every day, but Kṛṣṇa is coming for the first and perhaps only time. Kṛṣṇa is still far away, but I cannot lose a moment. Let Cupid shoot his arrows through my heart as he did to the gopīs!"

[40] The gopīs' jealousy of the women of Mathurā is a recurring theme. The verses from the *Bhramara-gītā* are particularly memorable in this regard (10.47.12–21).

[43–44] Here is an indication that the gopīs had previously made an effort to communicate with Kṛṣṇa through sending mynah birds. The speaking mynah bird is used throughout Sanskrit literature as a device, but is especially dear to the Gauḍīyas, particularly in the *nitya-līlā*. Cf. *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, etc. This verse also confirms that Uddhava had previously visited Vraja.

[45] These are frequently used conceits: peacocks dancing to the sight of rainclouds and swans flying to Mānasarovara at the coming of the rains. Cf. *Meghadūta* 11: "And on hearing your thundering, so gentle to the ear and whose power makes mushrooms cover the fertile earth, the royal swans, eager to go to Mānasarovara, will be your sky-companions as far as Kailāśa, carrying bits of lotus shoots in their beaks as provisions for the journey."

[46] The implication of the tenth canto inscribed on Kṛṣṇa's walls is that Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā is pining for Vṛndāvana. The same vision of Kṛṣṇa is given in Rūpa's *Lalita-mādhava*, where Kṛṣṇa watches plays about Vraja, and in Sanātana's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

[50–51] These verses are quoted in Brs 3.2.137 as an example of

friendship to Kṛṣṇa in the Mathurā context.

[53] One is reminded of Kuntidevī's prayers in which she minimizes the value of her submission because she is a weak woman. Cf. BhP 1.8.20. The humility of the gopīs is also clearly manifest in their statement to Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra (10.82.49) in which they say that they are simply attached to their homes and incapable of winning Kṛṣṇa over in the way that yogīs are.

[54 –62] Foot to crown description. Such descriptions of the *nāyaka* and *nāyikā*, or the gods, become standard fare in Sanskrit and vernacular Indian poetry of the late medieval period. Verse 54 is quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (4.4.11) as an instance of the secondary devotional sentiment of compassion (*karuṇā*).

[57] This verse is perhaps one of the most blatant revelations of the gopīs' consciousness of Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya*. See the introduction, p. 31.

[58] The *nāgas* (serpents) are said to be the chief residents of the nether regions, just as the gods are the denizens of heaven and humans of the earthly sphere. These are the so-called "three worlds."

[60] Keśī is the horse demon who was killed by Kṛṣṇa by ramming his arm down the throat. This explains the decoration on Kṛṣṇa's arm (BhP 10.36).

[69] This verse contains double-entendres based on the names of the three demons: Ariṣṭāsura was the bull demon (BhP 10.36), Tṛṇāvarta took the form of a whirlwind and tried to steal the baby Kṛṣṇa away (BhP 10.7); Vyomāsura, another demon, meets his demise in BhP 10.37.

[72] The Indian cuckoo, or koyīl, lays its eggs in the crow's nest. Its young resemble the crow chicks and so the mother crow takes care of them until they leave the nest.

[74–97] Viṣṇudāsa has quoted these verses as further examples to



UN 8.122. The subject there is the activities of Rādhā's *sakhīs*, whose service to Rādhā includes glorifying one lover's love to the other, increasing one's attachment for the other, taking one to meet the other, turning the *nāyikā* (Rādhā) over to Kṛṣṇa, setting her mind at ease by amusing words, dressing her, getting her to reveal her secrets, dissimulating her faults to Kṛṣṇa, deceiving her husband and other elders, instructing the *nāyikā*, arranging for the lovers' union at the appropriate time, serving her and her lover by fanning, etc., chastising them both when necessary, sending messages, and protecting the life of the *nāyikā* (UN 8.97–99). This is, of course, an example of *sandēśa-preṣaṇam*, sending messages.

[77] UN 14.13. This is an example, given at the beginning of Rūpa's description of the *sthāyibhāvas*, of the *nāyikā*'s awakening of love for Kṛṣṇa. In this particular instance, it is due to seeing Kṛṣṇa's beauty. Thus Viśvanātha points out that when Lalitā says "your inexplicable attractive form" she is absolving Rādhā of any blame; the fault is Kṛṣṇa's for being so beautiful. But then, she blames Rādhā's destiny—thus absolving Kṛṣṇa too of any blame. Like a moth goes in and out of the fire several times before perishing, so too Rādhā, after falling in love with Kṛṣṇa, resolved to give up her feelings, but each time flew back into love, only to perish. The use of "only once" illustrates how Rādhā's love for Kṛṣṇa is eternal, and only needed the vision of Kṛṣṇa's form to be ignited into a full burning flame of love.

[79] Kubjā, or Sairandhri, Kāmsa's servant girl, was also known as Trivakrā because of her hunchbacked form. She is an object of the *gopīs*' envy like the other Mathurā women. However, the *gopīs* hold her in disdain, in their knowledge of the inferior quality of her love, which Rūpa describes as *sādhārāṇī*, "common." The *gopīs*' love is named *samarthā rati*, "competent," for its ability to conquer Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's

relationship with Kubjā is also an avenue for the gopīs' to criticize his fickleness and lack of discernment. Kubjā's story is related in BhP 10.42.1–12 and 10.48.1–11. Rūpa's verdict on the quality of her feelings for Kṛṣṇa is given in UN 14.45–6.

[83] This verse is actually a *śleṣa* in which all adjectives can be applied equally to both Śiva and Kṛṣṇa.

[91] Uddhava's name, *pavana-vyadhi* (afflicted by a disease of the wind) means "madman." It was given to him because of his strange behavior in childhood, attributed to his love for Kṛṣṇa.

[92] In human form, Kalindī (Yamunā) is one of Kṛṣṇa's wives in Mathurā. Time (Yamarāja) is her brother, cf. verse 76. Uddhava is said to be a disciple of Bṛhaspati (BhP 3.1.25, 10.46.1), the spiritual master of the king of the demigods, Indra. He is thus well-versed in political science and diplomacy. It is evident from this verse that Uddhava had already been to Vraja where he had seen the glories of the gopīs (Cf. BhP 10.47.53–63). However, Lalitā indicates that he has apparently forgotten to transmit their message to Kṛṣṇa.

[94] Previously, she would not dare to look at things which promote the memory of you, her beloved, but now she is looking at them, in the hope that they will expedite her death. Viṣṇudāsa quotes a verse from the *Śṛṅgāratilaka* found in *Padyāvalī* (334) as a supplementary example for *mṛtyu* (see notes to 96 below):

O kunda flower bush, spread your dewy perfume,

O breezes, blow gently!

O moon! Reveal my hopes!

O Cupid! Stir up my desires!

The day has come when he was to return,

so friends, abandon all talk of him.

My heart wishes something different here today.

[95] Given in the UN (13.17) chapter on the *vyabhicāris* as an example *ādbinā glāniḥ*, "fatigue due to mental distress." Rūpa Gosvāmī defines *glāni* as the lifelessness which arises when bodily vitality is lost through excessive physical effort, mental distress, or sexual activity. *Ojas*, "vitality," is defined by Jiva Gosvāmī as a bodily element finer than semen (*ojaḥ śukrād apy utkrṣṭo dbātuviśeṣaḥ*). The symptoms of *glāni* are trembling, stillness, loss of body color, thinness, and restless motion of the eyes.

[96] In UN 15.178 Rūpa gives this verse as an example of the tenth stage of separation, *mṛtyu* (death). See notes to verse 2. Viśvanātha points out that the epithet *rāsa-kṛīḍā-rasika* ("expert enjoyer of the *rāsa* dance") is a *vyāja-stuti*, an insult disguised as praise, for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure at the *rāsa* dance was due to Rādhā alone, whom he has now put into such a terrible state.

[97] "You continue to wear jewelry, whereas Rādhā, following in the tradition of abandoned women, has long since given up decorating herself." The characteristics of the *proṣita-bhartṛkā* are given in the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (5.89) as follows: "The *nāyikā* becomes the *proṣita-bhartṛkā* when her beloved is abroad. She glorifies his qualities, feels depressed, loses weight, and cannot sleep. Her body is unkept, she has no interest in anything, becomes inactive, and worries a lot." Bharata Muni also describes her as "sighing a lot, wearing unappealing clothes, not wearing any jewelry or decorations, her cheeks as white as the foam which washes on the ocean shore."

[98–112] These verses are all quoted as further examples in Viṣṇudāsa's commentary on 5.90 describing the *proṣita-bhartṛkā*.

[104] Rūpa quotes this verse at UN 15.170 as an example of *udvega*

(mental disturbance), the third of ten *daśās* in *pravāsa*. *Udvega* is defined as an unsteadiness of mind accompanied by sighing, feverishness, motionlessness, worry, tears, paleness, and distress (UN 15.26).

[105] Rūpa gives this verse as an example of *gauṇa-sambhoga*, "secondary union," i.e., that union which comes in dreams. It can be of two kinds, common or extraordinary; the first is considered to be a *vyābhicāribhāva* and is described in the section dealing with the *vyābhicārins*, the latter is not much different from real union and is a source of great wonder. Like physical union, it is of four kinds: *saṁkṣipta*, *saṁkīrṇa*, *saṁpanna*, and *saṁṛddhimān*, according to the kind of separation that it follows (UN 15.210–2) *Haṁsadūta* 105 is specifically given as an example of *saṁpanna-sambhoga*, the union which follows a short, voluntary separation (15.215). Viśvanātha suggests that the reason this is *saṁpanna-gauṇasambhoga* rather than *saṁṛddhimān* is because the requirement of constraint is missing. "Kṛṣṇa knows that in a waking state Rādhā is angry with him for leaving for Mathurā, therefore he thinks, let me come and enjoy with her in a dream state when she will have forgotten that I ever left."

The word *samaya-dharma* is treated differently by different commentators: Jīva says that it refers to Kṛṣṇa's promise, while the others say that it means death ("inevitable end").

[106] These verses can be seen as examples of *vipralambhe viśphūrṭi*, "visions of the beloved in his absence." This is characteristic of love when it reaches the *anurāga* stage (UN 14.149). Rūpa's example there is as follows:

O you who are travelling to Mathurā,  
tell the lord of Mathurā,  
tell him loud and clear,

that a woman from the cowherd settlement  
sends you with this message:

If you have decided to live in the kingly palace,  
so be it.

But why do you come again and again  
in the form of these hallucinations

to give more suffering to my already suffering friend?

In this connection, Viṣṇudāsa quotes a number of supplementary examples, including the following much-quoted anonymous glorification of separation from *Padyāvali* (239): "If I must choose between separation and union, then better give me separation. When united, I have him alone; when separated, the whole universe becomes he." (*saṅgama-viraha-vikalpe varam iha viraho na saṅgamas tasya/ ekaḥ sa eva saṅge tribhuvanāṁ tanmayāṁ virahel/*)

[107] This verse is quoted at UN 15.203 as an example of *sampanna-sambhoga*, union which follows a short, voluntary separation. Such union is of two kinds: *āgati*, when the lover returns in a normal, human fashion, or *prādurbbhāva*, when such a return is a manifestation of a miraculous sort. The classical example is from the Bhāgavata when Kṛṣṇa suddenly appeared amongst the gopīs after being separated from them in the *rāsa* dance (10.32.2). Rūpa says that such union in separation is a characteristic of *rūḍha mahābbhāva* (the highest stage of love, unique to Rādhā) and brings a supreme experience of joy, in contrast to the *spḥūrti* (hallucinations) characteristic of the *anurāga* stage, which only result in a redoubling of the pain of separation once it dissipates (UN 15.205–6). Viśvanātha once again explains why this union is *sampanna* and not *saṁṛddhimān*: Kṛṣṇa does not seem to have any constraints, being able to return at will to Vraja, which

is not the case. Viśvanātha also holds that for the same reasons Kṛṣṇa's return to Vraja after killing Dantavakra is similarly a case of *sampanna-sambhoga*. Rādhā also in her confusion has lost sense of time and imagines herself to be in the past when Kṛṣṇa would go away to graze the cows and would meet with her at night.

[114 –117] These three verses demonstrate Lalitā's personal desire, and they set an early standard for later verses in *sakbī* and *mañjarī-bhāva*. Lalitā is a *vāmā*, or hard-line friend, who always instructs the *nāyikā* to play hard to get, who gets angry when she softens to him, who cannot be influenced by the *nāyikā* and has a bit of a cruel streak in her (UN 8.32). Rūpa quotes his own verse from *Padyāvalī* (222) as an example:

Think of some way to turn away  
the enemy of Mura;  
invent a reason to sulk.  
A man who has many mistresses  
finds no pleasure in the one who is too easy to get.

[115] Rūpa quotes this verse as an example of the *vyabhicāri-bhāva* of *nidrā*, "sleep due to fatigue." (UN 13.100)

[119–126] The following eight verses are addressed to different members of Kṛṣṇa's entourage. It takes on the character of *āvaraṇa-pūjā*, which is generally performed as a part of any worship ceremony.

[123] *Tarala* means "flickering" or "unsteady," but is also the name of the central gem of a necklace, usually a ruby.

[128–137] These ten verses addressed to Kṛṣṇa in his different incarnations is another example of the gopis' knowledge of his majesty. Here again, each verse can be read in two ways, one directed toward the *avatāra*, the other to Kṛṣṇa alone. With the exception of

verse 133, I have tried to bring both senses into a single translation of each verse. The puns and double-entendres are, of course, impossible to reproduce. A similar effort can be found in *Vidagdha-mādhava* (4.54) where Lalitā summarizes Kṛṣṇa's ten incarnations in one verse: "Kṛṣṇa, all of your *avatāras* are alive within you; we can see the signs of their presence: like the Fish in flood waters (*vanyā*), you show great pleasure in playing in the woods (*vanya*), you are hard-hearted, like the hard shell of the Tortoise; like the Boar associated with the Earth (*go*), you like to surround yourself by cows (*go*); like Nṛsimha, you enjoy using your hard fingernails; like Vāmana, you practice deception; like Paraśurāma, you are most frightening; like Rāmacandra, who killed the king of Laṅkā, you like to pull women's hair; like Balarāma, you are always intoxicated; like Buddha destroyed the sacrifices, you destroy our hopes; and like Kalkī with his sword, you cut through our hearts."

[130] See notes to verse 79.

[133] Bhṛgupati is a name of Paraśurāma. Bhṛgupāta is a term used for suicide by jumping from a high place, the word *bhṛgu* meaning "cliff, mountaintop."

[141] See introduction, p. 10.

[142] See introduction, p. 32 about the faultlessness of Vaiṣṇava poetry.

## O clever swan! Messenger!



You will say nothing. It won't be necessary. Whether you eventually go to Kṛṣṇa or not is not important to us. Kṛṣṇa will get this message anyway if the cord of love still binds these two hearts together. Come, my dear swan, today we will initiate you into Rādhā's love for Kṛṣṇa.

In order to fulfill Rūpa Mañjārī's desire for Rādhā's pleasure, by Yogamāyā's unobserved influence, the swan slowly descended to the thick growth of lotus flowers in the Yamunā and acquiesced to her desire with a mellow honking sound.

The two poems found in this volume are amongst  
the earliest written works of Rūpa Gosvāmin

ISBN 1-886069-09-3



90000>

9 781886 069091